no60 the magazine of cinema & television fantasy 95p

STARBURST

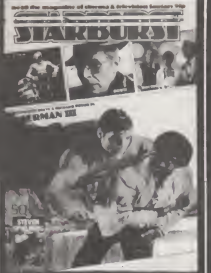
CHRISTOPHER REEVE & RICHARD PRYOR IN

SUPERMAN III

50 YEARS OF SCIENCE FICTION TELEVISION

THE STEVEN SPIELBERG STORY

THE HUNGER



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LETTERS

NAME THAT FILM

I wetched BBC2's screening of *The Halfway House* e few weeks ego and was very impressed as it was e very polished end high quality production (especiallly considering it was made in war-time Britain) with an intriguing supernetural theme.

It was while watching Mervyn Johns' performance as the Welsh innkeeper that I was reminded of another mid-forties British picture that he starred in, also on a supernetural theme (although e far more subtle one). As I recall he played e travelling salesman who, when visiting a large house, is deeply disturbed to find that events are following precisely the same course as those in e recurring nightmare he has suffered for some months past, e nightmare with e very nasty ending.

I believe the film was an anthology horror movie, one of the stories concerning an evil ventriloquist's dummy. Another was e rather frivolous one about e golfer who drowned himself after losing e game. However, the most memorable part of the film for me was the genuinely surprising and disturbing twist ending where Mervyn Johns suddenly wakes up with e jolt and realises the whole thing has just been another one of his recurring nightmares! He gets up end prepares for another dey's work and the last shot of the film (repeeted from the beginning) shows him driving up to the same house that's just been pictured in his dream. All the events we saw him experience will occur egein, only this time for reel!

Now the obvious question I went to ask is whet was the neme of the film but, I would also like to know if this was the first anthology horror film and was it the first movie to feature a demonic ventriloquist's dummy?

Anyway an article on either of these films would fit very nicely into your *Things That Go Bump in the Night* feature although I suppose you've elreedy got some more obvious titles lined up for that.

I must admit *TV Zone* is a great improvement this month. *Quatermass* is e far worthier subject to write about than *The Beverley Hillbillies* or *The Munsters*. Kneale's comments on *Quatermass and the Pit* concerning the quality of the film print are interesting as I saw a clip from the story on *Nationwide* a few weeks ago, during a feature on the BBC Radiophonics Workshop. A man stumbles into e churchyard end falls to the ground. A priest comes to help him but is horrified to see the gravel path around the men begin to move and writhe. I was very impressed by the chilling etmosphere created by thet one short clip end em fascinated to see that the *Pit* story was shown from December 1958 to January 1959 or, to put it another way, 25 years ago this coming Christmas. Don't you think e 25th Anniversary Celebration would be as good an excuse as eny to get the BBC to re-screen this classic story for the benefit of myself and many other Starburst readers who weren't eround to see it the first time. According to Kneale the film print is in good condition so there's no excuse for not showing it on those grounds. The question is how much persueding would the BBC need to repeet *Quatermass*?

Whilst on the subject of classic TV series', do you suppose the company holding the British screening rights to *The Twilight Zone* would be interested to know thet Spielberg's big new film this autumn is e scaled-up movie version of the old show? Wouldn't it like to cash in on the film's undoubted success by rescreening the original product? If no-one has the rights to reshowings et the moment wouldn't BBC2 just love to snap them up end repeat the success they had with *The Outer Limits*? Or perheps Channel 4, as right now they're screening *The Naked City* late on Saturday nights and thet TV series must be more than 20 years old. Surely there would be a demand for it. Well would there?

Richerd Fitzgerald,
Newark,
Notts.

We love easy questions! The film you are referring to is, of course, Ealing Studio's Dead of Night *(1945). But rather than say too much about it here, we'd rather wait until it craps up, naturally, in our* Bump in the Night *series. And the word is thet, even as this column is being typed, the Beeb are preparing* The Twilight Zone *for transmission – probably in September when the Spielberg/Landis movie opens.*

For any other readers with annoying questions they need answering, we are instituting e column devoted to providing information on all aspects of fantasy films tentatively scheduled for next month. So get all those questions rolling in now . . . there will be prizes for the most interesting.

Beware the Devil Women! A scene from an episode of The Twilight Zone.

LOOK WHAT I DID TO MY ID

Picture this – it's Wednesday, 4th of May end two-thirds of the Geng of Three, Phil Tuppin and Andy Wicks, are in London for the day. They've been to Harrods and gaped in awe et the truly zarjaz *Return of the Jedi* exhibition. Having survived thet they feel confident enough to walk into Forbidden Planet 2, happy in the knowledge thet nothing can beet e Ralph McQuerrie *Imperial Cruiser Exploding With Lots And Lots Of TIE Fighters And X-Wings And Other Craft Flying About All Over The Place* painting. Our two unsuspecting dimwits espy e huge pile of new Starbursts.

"Oh look," says Phil, cool end collected, "A Richard Marquand interview."

He flips casuelly through the pages, commenting, "Oh, there's e couple of black end white pictures."

"Let's have e look," says Andy.

He takes the magazine end scens through it from the beginning: Letters page, Things to Come, Jessica Herper Interview . . .

"WHAT!" they both scream. Andy closes the page, takes e deep breath and opens it egain to see e HUGE colour picture of the Geng's perennial fantasy female as well as e smell but perfectly-formed publicity still of the same wonderful person. Realising that this is no illusion brought on by too meny Big Macs, the peir dance, sing end generally act ecstatic for the next ten minutes. The third Geng member is informed of this happy occurrence e few hours leter during e forty minute phone call end he, Grahem Edwards, flips like crezy as well.

Thanks guys (like, wow).

From three A-level menic depressives . . .

Andrew J Wicks, Philip Tuppin
and Grahem M Edwards,
The Home of Happiness,
Denton,
Bournemouth.

That's as may be, guys . . . but what does "zarjaz" mean . . ?

TV CLASSICS

It's great to hear that you are working on more TV features for 1983, as I do miss the early days of Starburst when you covered quite a lot of memorable shows. *The Prisoner Explained* in issue 2 sticks in my mind as one of the best pieces I have ever read on that classic of the sixties pop art (soon to brighten the summer of '83 when it will be repeated by Channel 4).

And in issues 13 and 14 Richard Hollis cast an effectionate and amusing aya over the vintage days of *The Avengers*, as populated by Staad and Mrs Peel (and, as all of Britain must know by now, they're back in a peak time slot tool).

Channel 4's rescreenings of vintage fantasy shows appeers to be its only way of pulling high audiences. Petrick MacNee said in e recent netional newspaper interview that his old show is propping up an otherwise ailing channel. So obviously the time is right for Starburst, a magazine of current fantasy media happenings, to cover more TV.

Not that I'm trying to denigrate the letest Starburst formet. Your megazine has remeined highly successful because of its ability to chenge end edapt, remodelling itself to reflect the letest trends. In its early days it was an undiluted SF magazine. Then, when tha post *Star Wars* boom wened and horror beceme big bucks, Starburst began its coverage of the media macabre. And now, aftar covering just about everything in the worlds of SF end horror, Starburst has become the magazine of the fantastic (as averse to the science fantasy sub-heading), e far looser term which enables you to cover virtually anything and everything from Disney to Ringo Starr, James Bond to Popeya.

Starburst has always been current, seldom behind the times or boringly stuck in the sama old formet. How else could it have survived nearly sixty issues, e very difficult achievement for a fantasy media magazine. But if it is to remain Britain's No 1, now is the time for films to take e back seat.

Starburst goes TV? Thus rests the case for tha defanca!

Paul Malamad,
Mardwick,
Manchester.

INVASION VIEWS

Is writer Alan Murdoch two-faced, or does he like taking the readers for a ride? I ask this because in the first Starburst annual, Murdoch says of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), "*Invasion* is very much e product of the McCarthy-ite era that spawned it. So much that the excellent remaka (1979) had only a fraction of the impact."

Excellant remaka? How oddl In issue 58 of Starburst, in reply to reader Ian Pryor's letter, Murdoch states, "The orginal was a brilliant piece of SF/horror but Kaufman's remake was a rambling, non-sensical, artsy mess with neet special effects."

Which statement do we believe? Okey, I agree, the original is the best but I also admire Kaufman's version for its bleakness.

Otherwise this issue was its excellent usual self (how do you do it?) but I was sorry to read John Brosnan regards *Silent Running* as a turkey. It's my fevourite science fiction movia.

Finally your excellent Fantasy Film Quiz; I'm not boasting but I surprised myself by getting 88 points and can't wait to compate in the big compatition to find Fentasy Film Expert 1983.

One last message: keep up the febulous work.

Andrew Evison,
Grimsby,
South Humberside.

Alan Murdoch replies: "I'd like to think I'm not two-faced, though I have been accused of occasionally changing my mind. This has happened to me, especially as far as films are concerned, meny times over the years. I saw Philip Kaufman's Body Snatchers remake when it was released theetrically in 1978 (remember when the British used to go to the cineme?) and I enjoyed it. But, inexplicably, when it turned up on television about a year ago, it seemed boring and slow-moving. If you ever find yourself in the position of wondering which statement to believe again, Andrew, you're probably best to believe the most recent."

HAMILL FANS

Further to buying a copy of Starburst 58 in London during my lunch hour I read e letter from Miss S Martin of Leeds in the letters page regarding *Revenge — now Return of the Jedi*.

She also requests an address to reach Mark Hamill.

I am e Member of the Official Star Wers Fen Club and also e new Member of "On The Mark" — The Newsletter for Mark Hamill Fans.

This is run as a Fan Club in Orange, California and on behalf of the writers, I would request that if it were possible to send this information to Miss Mertin or better still, if you could put e small ad in your magezine about this.

The address is "On The Mark", PO Box 5276, Orange, California and my contact there is Lisa Cowen.

Lisa Broer,
Ilford,
Essex.

Thanks for the information, Lisa. We should edd that any enquiries to "On The Mark" should enclose an International Reply Coupon as a courtesy. And don't forget to tell them where you got the eddress from!

LETTER TO AMERICA

I feel that John Brosnan was a little unfair on *Starlog's* Kerry O'Quinn and David Garrold in Starburst 57. Whilst I would say that Americans are very differant compared to the British, I don't think it is fair to say, as generally as John does, that they are "funny people." Admittedly, O'Quinn and Garrold do seam to be somewhet naive in their, rather poetic, faith in each other but I don't find them oarticularly funny. If John means to imply that O'Quinn and Garrold are typical of their race than they would, I'm sure, be flattered. After all, it has been the optimistic outlook of Americans like O'Quinn and Gerrold which has given us *Star Trek, Star Wars, CE3K* and *ET* — without which there would probably be no Starburst, let alone *Starlog*.

Richard Starkings,
Weymouth,
Dorset.

LIVELY DEAD!

As expected, the *merds* has hit the fan over Tobe Hooper's *Return of the Living Dead* 3-D project. The first whispers of George Romero's outrage in the affair were percoleting through, even to my far-flung outpost as I filed last month's column. Now it's official. George has brought his lawyer into the act and written to the film's executive producer and his backers, requesting – soma say, insisting – on a rapid title change to stop muddling the public.

When the movie was first announced in March – with Britain's Hemdale combine involved in the top-secret, $4.5 million scenario by Dan O'Bannon – executive producer Thomas Fox was described as a one-time associate of Romero's. Fox was also said to have acquired the *Living Dead* rights from the Pittsburg King. Not, apparently, so . . .

The letter from George's lawyer, Thomas L. Creel, tells quite a different story – if hardly new in Hollywood history. "Your continual efforts over several years to unfairly trade upon our clients' reputations have confused the public, dameged our clients' property rights and have made it evident that it is impossible for you to release any picture under the title, *Return of the Living Dead*, which would continue to confuse the public and the industry."

If the film goes on, Romero wents the title changed, double-quick, and the news of such a change issued, just as swiftly to cease the confusion. He also wents Fox to stop intimating that he and Fox ever had any agreement about what, in effect, amounts to re-make rights of George's 1968 cult movie, *Night of the Living Dead*.

As mentioned lest month, the lest time a *Return of the Living Dead* came close to filming was in January 1981 when John Russo, George's co-author of the original film, was set to meke his directing debut with such a project. Russo's producer at the time, I've since discovered, was a gent called . . . you've got it . . . Thomas Fox!

Romero warned him off back then. Now it seems that because George Romero is more into Steve King scripts and *Creepshow II*, Fox thought he might get away with rushing a re-writa of his '81 project. He thought wrong. The *Living Dead* films are too important in Romero's career, for him to allow any other film-makers to hedge in on them. Besides, he still has the third and last of the series to meke – by January, 1985.

SUPERGIRL STARTS

Amid the greatest possible secrecy, or so they say, *Supergirl* started shooting on April 19 at Pinewood studios. As mentioned here before, newcomer Helen Slater hes the title role. She's now backed up by such heavy names as Faye Dunaway and Peter O'Toole. The rest of the cast includes Hart Bochner, the amorous reporter in *Rich and Famous*; Maureen Teefy from *Fame*; Peter Cook, still way, but way behind his old partner Dudley Moore in terms of screen stardom, Brenda Vaccaro. The only *Superman* regular in this film is, the Jimmy Olsen player, Marc McClure.

Roy Field and Derek Meddings are in charge of visual and special effects. Alen Hume is on camera and the assistent art directors include Stanley Kubrick's daughter Katharine. Ironically, Peter O'Toole joins *Supergirl* straight from the set of an American tv-version of *Pygmalion*, which features as Eliza Doolittle none other than . . . Margot Kidder!

JUNGLE GIRL

Obviously this is the yeer of the heroines . . . John Guillermin joins the current movie trek to Mexico to start shooting *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*, on August 21. The film will later move to Kenya. *Superman* writer David Newman supplies the script, Paul Aratow is producing but as yet, no Sheena has been signed. "I won't be Brooke Shields that's for sure. Guillermin left har *Sahara* picture in a hurry. Like most directors . . . Than again, from all accounts, Brooke's mama is a perfect queen of tha (film land) jungle!

INDY'S TITLE

What wes I saying only last month eboot not trusting George Lucas titles until the premiere tickets hit the mat? "Indy II" has already gone through a change. It's now *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom*. (That's nothing. Elliott Gould's new comedy has gone through five changes in a single month before New York cameres.)

INDY'S LATEST

No room for feisty Marion Revenwood in the new Indy ventura, which I gather is a prequel, not e sequel, to *Raiders*. So, it's goodbye to Karen Allen (busy enough making Richard Mergand's new romantic film in Peris, anyway) and it's hello to . . . Kate Capshaw. As soon as she completed her Los Angeles st picture, *Dreamscape*, with Max Von Sydow, Kate joined Spielberg, Ford and the rest of the Lucasfilm stalwerts on location in Sri Lanka on April 18, this year.

Apparently, Kate had first caught Spielberg's filmic fancy a year ago when he caught her in the first movie from Marry Tyler Moore's tv combine, *A Little Sex*. The film flopped.

Kate Capshaw, evidently, did not. Her partner in that outing, by the way, had been one of Steven's *1941* crew, Tim Matheson. He must have a thing about flops.

Richard Merquend's assistant director on *Jedi*, David Tomblin, is working alongside Spielberg again. Also repeating his *Raiders'* chore is cinematographer Douglas Slocombe. George Gibbs is the special effects supervirser. Vic Armstrong is in charge of stunts and Spielberg's usual cutter, Michael Kahn oversees the eventual job. The one big surprise in the technical cast is Rick Baker handling the special make-up effects. Spielberg and Baker, the *American Werewolf* Oscar-winner, parted company with various heated words when last working together . . . on the *Night Skies* venture which became *E.T.*

BOORMAN'S PROJECT

Gary Kurtz was right. John Boorman has changed the name of his *Little Nemo* production. It's now called *Where The Dree* and will take in various other comic strip characters. Boorman, who's producing Arno Selignac's directing bow, could have called it simply *Superkids*. The cast includes his kids from *Excalibur*, Katrina and Cherlie, plus pal Sean Connery's son, Jason. Bigger names are Marvey Hinel and French comic (so-called) Michel Blanc. Shoohing's afoot in Poissy, just outside Paris. Gary Kurtz is preparing a $15 million animation film of Winsor McKay's *Little Nemo*, scripted by Ray Bredbury, as a co-production with Japan.

BRADBURY'S CHRONICLES

And there's more news from the Bredbury factory . . . In conjunction with April's American premiere of his Disney movie, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, Rey end Orson Welles have created a 104-minute radio version of the book. In *Star Wars* fashion, the radio play has been aired on some 200 leading American radio networks – plus a further hundred college stations. After cineme and radio, where else can the guy turn – but tv, right? Right! The Homa Box Office pay-cable tv company is backing a series of shows based on Reys sf yarns. Title? What else but *The Bredbury Chronicles*. Can you hear me BBC-2?

FIRST TAKES

Spielberg discovery, director Robert Zemeckis due to direct *Cocoon*, an sf script by Tom Benedict, for Steven's original Hollywood backers, Dick Zanuck and David Brown . . . American tv is tinkering with an sf series again, with a pilot film called *Wishman*. As in wish-for-a-hit-men . . . Which reminds me, *Jaws 3-D* and *Psycho II* were sold to tv over there, months before being seen in cinemas any place. Are they *that* bad? . . . Jules Harrison is the pseydonymous director of Italy's pasta mix of *Mad Max* and *First Blood*, otherwise known to its scripter as *Exterminators of the Year 3000*. Remember when the year 2000 seemed far enough ahead . . . In short, Italy is up to its usual rip-offs. Because the same Roman backers are behind David Williams' *Return of the Extra-Terrestrials* . . . Elmer Bernstein scoring *Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone 3-D* movie . . . Rita Coolidge, Kris Kristofferson's ex-old lady, warbling this year's Bond song.

Marc McClure as Daily Planet photographer Jimmy Olsen focuses his attention on Supergirl. *Far right: The most famous monkey in screen history,* King Kong, *celebretes his 50th birthday this year.*

which is not, of course, called *Octopussy* but "All Time High" . . . Sounds like Cheech and Chong wrote it . . .

OSCARMYTH

No Oscar, yet again, for Steven Spielberg. He must, by now, be wondering just what the merry hell he has to do to win one. Lose money, perhaps? Make a loser? Nope! That never worked with *1941*. When voting, the academicians just didn't take any notice of the pre-Oscar advertising hype - one line of which ran, "Gandhi was a great man, but *E.T.* is a great movie." According to one insider, "By voting for *Gandhi*, an Academy member can feel noble." And lets face it, Hollywoodians do not get many chances to be considered noble. But the best reasons for them choosing *Gandhi* over *E.T.* came from the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner columnist Joe Morgenstern: Gandhi he said, was everything the voters wanted to be: "Moral, tan and thin"!

Steven Spielberg took it all well enough. "I've been round long enough to know that people who deserve Oscars don't always win them. The tendency is for important films to win over popcorn entertainment. History is more weighty than popcorn." One of his rivals in both film and director sections, *Tootsie*'s Sydney Pollack, knew he didn't stand much of a change in the race but was less than pleased with the outcome. "The entire world has endorsed everything Steven has ever done - and the Academy ignored it. Probably Steven's hair must get whiter before he can win."

OSCAR FUTURE

Never mind, Steven. Your day will come. Sid Sheinberg is seeing to that. When Sid was boss of Universal MCA-tv in 1969, he gave Spielberg his first directing job. These days, Sid is head honcho of the entire Universal shoot. And he's the guy who bought Thomas Keneally's prize-winning book, *Schindler's Ark*, for his protégé to make into a film. Steven has yet to actually sign a deal to direct; he tends to stave off confirmation until he feels he's on to a winner.

Sheinberg's plan is simple enough. He feels the Keneally story, set in World War II Nazi Germany, will take Spielberg out of the fantasy area, allowing him to "grow up", as it were, and make a real film for once. With or without Spielberg at the helm, the project could be a decent hit, a kind of *Holocaust*-cum-*Gandhi*. With Spielberg in charge, the film would naturally become more important - and minus any *Jews/CE3K/Raiders/E.T* hype and merchandising hoople – it could lead to him winning his Oscar come 1985. That's Sid's game-plan, anyway.

Meanwhile, I've been asked why a book called *Schindler's Ark* will become a film called *Schindler's List*. The reason, oh my brethren, is Spielberg. If he doesn't make the film version, I'm sure the book's title will be maintained. If he does direct, it has to be *List* and not *Ark* for all the obvious reasons . . . to avoid it being thought of by the public (and maybe the Academicians who, believe me, don't see all the films they vote for) as *Raiders 3*!

BEATEN ENCOUNTERS

Poor Steven. Just not his year is it? *Tootsie* has lately passed *Close Encounters* as Columbia studio's most successful film at the international box-office. In Paris, alone, the comedy has won a million ticket-buyers. Considering Columbia's other huge hits include *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *On The Waterfront*, *It Happened One Night*, *Kramer vs. Kramer* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Oliver* and *A Man For All Seasons*, that's one helluva achievement for Dusty Hoffman.

OSCAR JAILED!

There was one director who had a worse Oscarnight than Spielberg. And he was a winner. Soon after collecting his trophy for his animation short, *Tango*, the Polish filmmaker Zbigniew Rybczynski was in jail for the night.

Seems he popped out of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for a spot of fresh air – and couldn't get back in. He tried hard and a security guard stopped him. As the visiting Pole couldn't speak English and had no identification (or indeed, his Oscar) with him, a punch-up ensued. With a bizarre example of Solidarity, Rybczynski allegedly felled the guard with a well-aimed boot in the goolies – and wound up, in cuffs, at the Los Angeles County Men's Jail. "An Oscar first," said someone from the Academy . . . much relieved to hear that the actual Oscar wasn't behind bars with the poor Pole who must have felt he was back home in Poland.

CARRY ON, JOHN

If you believe all I have to read in the way of mailed publicity hype, handouts and scrawled messages for my spies around the world, John Carradine is currently making his 170th film – with the *Ice Pirates* sf offering, co-starring tv refugees Robert Urich, Mary Crosby and John Huston's daughter, Angelica.

I have no wy of proving, or even disproving the story. Except to say that most magazine articles and reference books have been claiming that long John – he was 77 in February – had already made more than 170 films fifteen years ago. By my own count, I have him in at least 120 films, but I have to admit that any Carredine filmography begins to get very messy from the '60s onward, given the number of foreign films he made, most of which have ended up being released with two or four titles each.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying John, or his MGM publicist is a liar. Fer from it. It's quite likely the old-timer hes made closer to 200 movies. Either way, I think it's about time the Hollywood Academy decided to reward him for services rendered to cinema. I mean, if Mickey Rooney can get an honorary Oscar – (and why not?), why not John Carradine, too. They've both made as many classics – as downright turkeys. They're both survivors. They're both terrific. Over to you, Oscar . . . and about time too.

CARRY ON, JOHN II

As prophesied last month, producers Dick Zanuck and David Brown are pulling out of 20th Century-Fox and taking their scheduled movies to Werner Brothers. Top number of their clutch is *The Ninja*, which John Carpenter will definitely direct in November, once he's finished the Steve King chiller, *Christine*. Carpenter's record is easier to work out than Carradine's. *The Ninja* will be John's tenth movie (counting his TV work). Meanwhile the film John had cancelled by Universal last yeer, Steve King's *Firestarter*, looks like firestarting again. Under new ownership. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but that means Dino De Do-Dah has it. For shooting in Mexico, no doubt, but maybe with Debra Hill producing which could mean with John directing . . .

A KING'S LIFE

As if we didn't know, Stephen King has placed it on record that what his life is all about – is horror. "I'd write the stuff even if I weren't paid for it," he says in his (June, 1983) *Playboy* interview, "because I don't think there's anything sweeter on God's green earth than scaring people. I suppose the ultimate triumph would be to have somebody drop dead of a heart attack, literally scared to death. I'd say, "Gee, what a shame," and I'd mean it. But part of me would be thinking, 'that really worked!'"

EL E.T.?

Worse still for Oscarless Spielberg. The Spanish director (alleged) Juan-Piquer Simon, who has to be about the worst movie-makar on this side of the Atlantic, has started a rip about space visitors. It's called *E.T. Intelligence*, which is not very intelligent. Universal will slap an injunction on that one in hours.

KING KONGED

On March 2, 1933, the one, the only *King Kong* first opened for record-breaking business at both of New York's largest cinemas; Radio City Music Hall and the New Roxy. And the combined total of 10,000 seats was never enough for the ensuing crowds . . . To celebrate *Kong*'s 50th anniversary, the Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack epic opened again in New York – in another double helping. It was aired on a local TV channel (10,000 viewers easily!) and started a revivel run at the small Thalia cinema. Better still, Kong was all set to 'climb' tha Empire State Building anew. However, 50mph winds ruined this birthday publicity stunt about one hundred floors up when high winds caused a lesion in the neck of Robert Vicino's 84ft. and 3,000 lb. inflatable rubber super-monkey. The climb began egein once the hole in Kong's neck had been sutured and the winds died down a bit. It was successfully hauled up the full quarter-mile high, but within a day the winds won again, sundered the vinyl-coating and left Kong hanging around, as *Time* put it, like an old brown garbage bag.

Most of the live-action for the wondrous old classic was shot in what is now Lair International Studios on Washington Boulevard, in Culver City. These days, that joint is better known as the home of *E.T.* Question is: Will *E.T.* be remembered in 2032?

Don't answer that one. Try these instead . . .

KONG QUIZ

As our own contribution to Kong's big birthdey, here's a small quiz on the '33 movie. Answers, if you think you really need 'em, are at the end of the column.

1. Of those two names above, who directed *King Kong* – Merian C. Cooper or Ernest B. Schoedsack?

2. Who supplied the scenario: (a) Edgar Wallace (b) Noel Coward (c) James A. Creelman and Ruth Rose (d) Merian C. Cooper? ➤

8. How tall was the biggest of the Kong models: (a) 18 ins (b) 3ft (c) 50ft?
4. Who played the heroine, later played by one of this year's Oscar winners, Jessica Lange?
5. Robert Armstrong's Carl Denham spoke the last words of the film, what were they . . . approximately, at least?
6. Offer a rough estimate cost of the *sound* effects of the film – go on, just for a laugh.

JACK'S BACK

More early film work by the *King Kong* teamsters, Willis H. O'Brien and sculptor Marcel Delgado, is about to be re-made . . . for the second time. And I know we've heard all this before, but . . . Jack Arnold, doyen of the creature-features of the 50s, is coming back, at age, 67, to do it. That is, as long as Universal can get it together budget-wise (and no doubt, given Jack's age, insurance-wise), he should be helming the third screen version of Sir Authur Conan Doyle's dinosaur-ridden *Lost World* later this summer.

Last time, we heard of Jack's potential return to the fold (and to his old studio), he was connected with John Landis' re-tread plans for one of Jack's own hits, *The Creature From The Black Lagoon* (1954). That re-tread, in fact, was trodden on from on high. And Landis shot off and did his own creature from the blackness of Soho movie, instead.

Jack Arnold's latest return has nothing to do with Landis or any other of his movie-brat supporters club. Sandy Roland, the scriptwriter of *High Road To China* and her ex-rock 'n' roller husband have refashioned the 1925 O'Brien film (which starred Bessie Love and Wallace Beery) and the 1960 follow-up (Claude Rains, Michael Rennie) and they've asked for Jack to direct . . . with the flawless Albert Whitlock in charge of effects. Let's hope it comes together. I'd like to see Jack back in action.

For the uninitiated, Jack Arnold is a one-time stage and screen actor who started directing in 1950, tried every genre from documentary to westerns, but really made his name in sf and horror movies. He brought his Creature back in *Revenge of the Creature* (1955) and went on to make *Tarantula* (1955) and best of all, *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957). He also directed the film that really launched Peter Sellers in America, *The Mouse That Roared* (1958).

SANDY WHO?

But somehow, I feel sure, you're still stuck one paragraph back . . The penny's dropped, right? Yes, the scenarist of the *High Road To China*, the all-action film which made up for Tom Selleck losing *Raiders*, is . . . a lady. Sandy Roland is really Sandra Roland. She's also really the daughter of the *China* producer, Fred Weintraub. When she became the filth writer of what had been a Roger Moore vehicle, her father decided to avoid charges of (a) nepotism and (b) feminism by suggesting Sandra switch to the more masculine, or at least unisexual nickname of Sandy. "You gotta get in the door any way you can," was her only comment.

At 32, she's been in that door for some time. Spielberg's favourite director, Martin Scorsese, was Sandy's mentor in the movie game – her boyfriend, too, for a while. She worked on both his *Alice Doesn't Live Here*

Anymore (1974) and *Taxi Driver* (1976), before a "tortuous" year with the CBS tv network. Now she's really smokin'. Sandy has two other scripts ready for the *China* combine, *Shipkiller*, and her father's *Crosswinds*. She's also working on an original sf number, *City of Light*. Melissa Mathison is not alone.

Melissa's *E.T.* script, by the way, won her the Writers Guild of America nod as Best Original Script in the guild's recent 35th annual awards.

SILLY SEASON

I'm not overly sure you'll be too interested in seeing these, but you might like the benefit of the Crawley Early Warning System. Jennings Lang, the *Airport* producer (which I suppose is better than being the *Crossroads* producer – though not much) has announced, wait for it, *Airport 2000* and – you ain't heard nuthin' yet – *The Illegitimate Son of King Kong*!

Perhaps Lang is related to one Myron Gold who has persuaded Donald Pleasance down Mexico City way to join bosomy June Wilkinson in something called . . . *Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tillie*. Poor Pleasance must by now have collected more bad odour movies than even Orson Welles.

At least both producers can truly claim their films will make your flesh crawl. And one of the movies is honest enough to admit it's a bastard before shooting has even begun.

MEXICALI THROES

What, you may well ask after recent columns, are all these American movies doing in Mexico City? *Dune* is understandable; deserts are required, of course and the country can provide them, as well as tropical jungles and a couple of volcanos with the quite unpronouncable names or Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl. But why *Amityville 3-D*, a telly-flick called *Roses* and Donald Pleasence's odd movie, *Frankenstein's Great Aunt Tillie . . .*?

The answer, inevitably, is less Ixtaciihuatl than folding greenstuff. A year ago there was some 25 peso to the dollar. Today, it's around 150. Therefore, making a film in Mexico can cost as much as 70% less than in Hollywood. No wonder Dino is there in force. He's been there, before, as it were. He made movies with the Americans when they invaded Rome in the 50s, when it became known as Hollywood on the Tiber. He was active in London later – Hollywood on the Thames. Now, he's over the border down Mexico way – which is known, more blatantly, as Hollywood on the Cheap.

EXTRA TAKES

If you need further proof that David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* slid straight down the pan, it's available on the cassette already in the United States, just 120 days after its cinema premiere – exceptionally early for America . . Disney has started a *Zorro and Son* series . . If it's successful, I suppose we're in for *Davy Crockett and Son*, too . . Or even a *Robin Hood* . . Due out soon, Christopher Frank's *The Making of The Dark Crystal* book, plus Richard J. Anobile's *Official Rocky Horror Picture Show Movie Novel* (gulp!) . . Wonder what they'll call the video version . . Best book around just now is Michael Feeney Callan's biography of *Sean Connery* on the W.H. Allen label . . Even Sean should approve of this one . . West Germany's big fantasy entry, *The Never Ending Story*, is being sold with the following pitch, "A boy who needs a friend, finds a world that needs a hero." Sounds familiar, wouldn't you say . . *Avengers* man Brian Clemens has his latest telescript, *Romance on the Orient Express*, set up as a Franco-American tv movie . . Angelica Huston joins Robert Urich, Mary Crosby and John Carradine in *Ice Pirates* . . French director Alain Jessua preparing *Frankenstein 1990*, the mix as before except the creature now has a miri-computer for a brain . . Black director Michael Schultz, minus a real hit since *Car Wash*, is prepping an sf comedy, *Mother Ship*. No relation to *Spaceship* which is the new release title for Bruce Kimmel's 1981 farce, *The Creature Wasn't Nice* . . Roger Moore rests(?) from Bond in *The Naked Face* . . *Blade Runner* beauty Derryl Hannah is the mermaid in Ron (Happy Days) Howard's *Splash* at Disney, beating Warren Beatty's *Mermaid* comedy to the off . .

FANTASPORTO '83

David Cronenberg's *Scanners* easily won the best movie nod at Portugal's third fantasy festival at Porto – known in the fantasy film fest biz as Fantasporto. The public voted for *Britannia Hospital*, though. An odd choice for a true fantasy event, but that's the way it goes at such events, linked as they always are to a batch of new(ish) films about to open in foreign locales, where the "winning" of some local prize adds some mileage to their box-office. The choice of movies seems to simmer on the ground each year – particularly for the smaller events. This is why Porto also saw the first, faltering moves towards forming a fantasy festival association, linking the events of Avoriaz, Paris, Stiges, Trieste, Brussels, Madrid and, naturally, Porto, in an effort to engender more interest – and thereby, films! – from movie combines. Not that Avoriaz or Madrid seem to find much trouble in securing the goodies.

Meanwhile, back at the Porto contest, Spanish director Bigas Luna collected the helming award (and the critics' trophy) for his *Caniche*, which is more in line with Lindsay Anderson's *Britannia* satire than fantasy. A more genuine slice of bravura fantasy, Piotr Kramler's *Chronopolis* – meticulous but boring; too boring to win a place in the lively Paris event, for example – had to make do with a Special Mention. Britain was lucky to win anything at all – the effects award for the ghastly *Xtro*. French actress (or so it has been alleged) Isabelle Adjani repeated her Cannes '81 triumph, being named top actress of *Possession*. Best actor (and script) went to Yugoslavia's *The Rhythm of Crime* and Argentina collected an Honourable Mention (no comment) for *Los Viernes de la Eternidad*. And so, hit the airport, grab a plane and next stop, Madrid for . .

IMAGFIC '83

The brains in Spain stay mainly on the . . same winners as everywhere else. No great surprises, therefore at the Madrid fantasy fest. Best film was *The Dark Crystal* (same as Avoriaz). It took the Audience Award as well – in harness with *Britannia Hospital* (same as Porto). Also repeating its home-made Avoriaz triumph was *Devil on the Island*, winning my (ex-porno) film-making buddy, Francis Leroi, the directing nod – plus the actress trophy for Annie Duprey. Best actor proved to be Thomas Schuscke in West Germany's *Das Zweite Gesicht*, the real find of Madrid; it also nabbed both scripting and music honours. Another German entry, *Geuer und Schwert*, earned the camera prize for Jacques Steyn.

The French feature, *Time Masters* (designed by Moebius), collected the main animation prize. In the animation shorts, the honours were divided equally between Yugoslavia and Russia. Then, as in Portugal, the Argentinians collected a special commendation for their entry . . and Martin Gies went home with the Best Debut prize for his *Danni* film. Hollywood only got a look in with *Amityville II* – applauded, and indeed awarded for Joe Cuervo's make-up effects.

And so, now it's back on the plane – no, well, the train this time – and as you read this I'll be back doing that old familiar dance. The Cannes-can. As I say, Tony Scott's *The Hunger* will be unfurled there (with David Bowie, like Mel Gibson, nipping in for a day or so). But the *E.T.* spot this year, the event's final film, will be John Badham's *Wargames* which has a video-mad kid plugging his system into the Pentagon's equipment and damn nearly beginning World War III. As if Darth Vader Reagan needed such help in that matter . .

CANNES CAN'T

Hollywood producer Doug Curtis was telling me, last May at Cannes, about plans to pair together John Carpenter as producer and Joe Dante as director for *The Philadelphia Experiment*. That's the one about the U.S.S. Eldridge vanishing into a (supposedly factual) time-slip in the '40s (*Starburst 51*). Latest news on this similarly vanishing movie is that it's reappeared. The "new" New World Pictures (Roger Corman's ex-outfit) will make the movie. Carpenter and Curtis remain on board as producers, but due to *Gremlins* and other Spielberg plans, Joe Dante can no longer be at the helm.

The script, which was an original by Wallace Bennett, has since gone through as many hands as *Tootsie* – Michael Janover winning the final credit. However, it looks as if one of the other guys with a pen in it, will wind up directing. His name? Harley Cokliss! Story seems to have changed a bit in the interim (like *Mandrake*, no doubt, which is now into a fourth draft). When the Eldridge returns from its inexplicable time-warp, two men are missing . . and despite the ship being the main setting, most of the movie now takes place at a U.S. Navy weapons testing centre in a desert! (Sounds like another Mexico job.)

Shooting is now due to begin in August. Films, you see, take time. Good films need a goodly amount of time. Doug Curtis has used the year's delay well, though. He's arranging three movies at MGM/UA including *Bytes* – set in a computer camp for kids. "It's a comedy," says Doug, "about the future nerds of the world." I like it already.

A trio of glossy publicity brochures for the forthcoming comedy The Man With Two Brains *starring the bizarre Steve Martin, the Sean Connery* Bond *offering* Never Say Never Again *and a promise (or is that threat?) of more* Conan *movies from the Dino De Laurentiis stable.*

ROMERO'S MARVEL

I have a smidgen more information about this new superhero character being devised by George Romero and Marvel Comics. He's anonymous, for now. But this much I've heard – he'll be the sheriff of a futuristic Americana city. Only ever so slightly in the future (it creates havoc with the budget, otherwise!). He'll come equipped, again only slightly, I gather, with superhuman powers. He's on the drawing-board now, after a fortnight's planning and midnight oil burning by George and a Marvel editor. Even though we're involved, the entire project is still shrouded, not to say downright buried in secrecy.

The idea came about because George and his partner, Richard Rubinstein, simply wanted to make a superhero movie. They checked around and all the superheroes have realised what's going on, got themselves agents and sold their supersouls for a great deal of superpension money. So they had to create a new hero.

All superheroes into films? Well nearly. Particularly now that Roger Corman has celebrated his sale of his New World combine by also dealing with Marvel Comics. He's bought the big screen rights to *Spiderman*.

KING ANSWERS

Okay, this is where you find out if you're right or . . Kong!

1. Both of them (trick question, see); they both also played small roles in the movie. *2.* (c) the idea came from Cooper and supposedly Wallace, although Cooper always made it plain that "Actually, Edgar Wallace didn't write any of *Kong*, not one bloody word. I'd promised him credit and so I gave it to him." Well, it all helped in the hype at the time. *3.* (a) According to the kingpin of the technical staff, sculptor Marcel Delgado. *4.* Fay Wray – and if you didn't know that one, you should be condemned to reading Starlog for a year. *5.* "Oh no. It wasn't the airplanes. It was *Beauty* killed the Beast," *6.* Would you believe: $430. Ben Burtt must spend that a day – well, a week – on tapes alone!

PAL SEASON

For those who like their science fiction classics on the big screen, London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) has scheduled a summer season of Pal Pictures. Running from Saturday, 2nd July to Sunday 28th August, the season will include *The Great Rupert* (1949), *When Worlds Collide* (1951), *War of the Worlds* (1953), *Tom Thumb* (1958), *The Time Machine* (1959), *The 7 Faces of Doctor Lao* (1964) and *Doc Savage* ('375). The catch is that the season is intended for children, so all you over 16s will probably have to wear your old school caps and shorts (just kidding!). For further details contact The Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London SW1 (including a SAE) or call 01-930 0493, and tell 'em we sent you.

STARBURST AT THE OSCARS

Report by Anna Maria Crowcroft
April 11th, 1983
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

It is evening. We are in downtown Los Angeles at the Dorothy Chandler Music Pavillion. Our car pulls up in front of a red carpet, which stretches far away into the distance . . . crowds of people are screaming, though no one famous has arrived yet. Some of these people have been waiting days to glimpse their favourite stars.

At the front of the crowd is a line of press folk, representing every tv station and major newspaper in the world . . .

We are ushered into the building and our car drives away to some massive underground parking structure.

Walking along that red carpet is euphoric. To not be famous or rich and yet have crowds scream at you is an event in itself! Inside that pavillion — no press allowed — our cameras are regretfully put away.

The famous sip champagne.

At this point I spot some of the nominees . . . they're the ones trying not to look nervous.

I try to corner Steven Spielberg for some pre-award quotes but the mass of the crowd pulls me away.

A cheer goes up as Ben Kingsley walks in. He sees Richard Attenborough and they embrace. Both are the favourites for tonight's show. Personally, I hope that *E.T.* will sweep the board. Still looking for Spielberg we wander around the foyer.

I spot Margot Kidder in a Southern Belle costume saying "Hi" to newly arrived Christopher Reeve and his wife.

Margot is presenting tonight, is she nervous? I ask. "Yeah! When you think that 400 million people are out there it makes you kinda nervous!"

Chris Reeve just smiles as though butter wouldn't melt — after all he *is* Superman. If the evening gets too much he can always fly out of there.

Jessica Lange is one of the last to arrive. "I am so pleased just to be nominated" is her passing line. Everyone says that but they're all hoping . . .

Four hours later we stagger out — with mixed reaction to the final awards — *E.T.* was a popular favourite.

I am nowhere near Spielberg as I sit down. Eight rows in front — onstage — Dudley Moore and Liza Minnelli are rehearsing. Suddenly the music starts and the show is on!!

The audience at the Oscars sees an entirely different show. To begin with there is no applause while the nominees in the lesser categories are being read out. Also, between commercials a crew of desperate stage hands re-creates entire sets. These range from massive fountains to smoking neon platforms to the country scene of "Up where we belong".

The Bernadette Peters number has to be seen to be believed. Ten brave women are hoisted on wires attached to the curtains while a cast of hundreds laughs, dances and sings — entertaining the entire world for one night.

After Mickey Rooney's Lifetime Achievement Award there wasn't a dry eye in the house. We all jumped up to give him a standing ovation and he joked, "Yes, a good time to stretch your legs".

The show is very well planned but mistakes do happen and this year was no exception. Apparently the rest of the world didn't see Richard Pryor's response to a desperate camera man jumping off a 5 foot high structure to be "off" in time for the next number.

The audience is part of the show and we sat with bright lights on us the whole time. Each section of the theatre is treated to a monitor so that we can simultaneously watch the show as it goes out. There is a one second delay in the transmission. It's really fascinating!

Four hours later we stagger out — with mixed reaction to the final awards — *E.T.* was a popular favourite. In the slow, massive crowd — over 4,000 members of the industry: producers, directors and stars — I spot him. He is tired, about 10 miles from home . . . and he's disappointed. I sidle up to him.

"Mr Spielberg. Disappointed?" So is the rest of the world. A thoughtful smile creeps over his face. "Well, that's show business," he retorts.

The crowd separates us – a frightening feeling that one could easily be crushed. We all make our way down the magic staircase that winds down the centre of the Pavillion. The whole building is made of red carpet and real crystal – it's a real palace!

Outside Meryl Streep is waiting her turn to jump into her limo and depart. "Where is your Oscar?" I ask.

"Oh, it's funny" she says "back stage they take it away to be engraved and mail it to your house. So the one they present to you is just a prop – typical Hollywood."

There is an old legend in Hollywood. Bette Davis once said that the statue looks like her uncle . . . Oscar. And that's how it came to be named.

Bette isn't here tonight – but everyone else is.

Both tired and hungry and waiting to go to the party, Sylvester Stallone and John Travolta are talking in the corner about their new movie coming out this summer, *Staying Alive*.

It's over – until next year. Stars and studio heads alike head for the Beverly Hills Hilton and a top notch Celebration dinner. Parties begin tonight that will go on for two days. The event is over but the real celebrations – those the world never sees – are just beginning. And for the winners it was a night they will remember for the rest of their lives●

For John Brosnan's views on this year's Oscars, see page 39 of this issue.

RICHARD LEST

I'm about to reveal something remarkable about Richard Lester, associate producer on *Superman I* and director of *Superman 2*: he was once an immigrant to Australia.

Yes, it's true. Disturbed by Britain's involvement in the Suez crisis of 1957 he and his wife decided to leave the country and immigrate to Australia. But we only lasted out there for about 7 weeks," he admitted. "I'm afraid we weren't too impressed by the place. And I also felt so far away from things that I recognised and understood. I began to feel increasingly desperate and paranoid as our money dwindled. We kept saying, 'Well, we can *still* afford to leave. Two more weeks' – but as it got closer to the point where we would have to cash in one of our return tickets we began to feel, well, *trapped*...

"I was offered a job as a tv producer but it was about £5 less a week than it was costing me to live. And there was no real future in Australian tv for me at this time. TV was in its infancy there, you might say, in 1957. I appeared twice on tv while I was in Australia – once in Sydney and once in Melbourne – and both times the floor in the studio was not yet dry. They were sort of *mud-packed* floors. In Melbourne I was guest on a programme called *I've Got a Secret* and every single thing went wrong. For example it was a half-hour show but it ran over length by *27 minutes*. And when the woman with the secret was announcing what it was someone pushed the wrong button and as a result we, on the panel heard it but the audience didn't. So the moderator turned to the woman and asked her, 'Have you got *another* secret?'"

Experiences like that helped convince Lester and his wife to use their return tickets while they still had them and they arrived back in England in 1958. In the

ER on SUPERMAN III

Interview by John Brosnan

years since then he has received fabulous as the highest of such films as *A Hard Day's Night, Help!, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, The Bed Sitting Room, Petulia, How I Won the War, The Three Musketeers, Robin and Marian, Cuba* & the *Superman* series. At the time I spoke to him at his Pinewood Studio office he was busy supervising the finishing touches to *Superman 3* which again stars Christopher Reeve as well as Richard Pryor, Annette O'Toole (left) Robert Vaughn and Pamela Stephenson, and should be hitting our screens in June. ►

Though he's lived most of his life in Britain Richard Lester is actually an American. He was born in Philadelphia in 1932 and soon became something of a child prodigy, starting school at the age of 3 and university at 15. "It's been downhill ever since," said Lester.

While at university he formed a singing group which was hired by a local tv station. The group was soon fired but Lester stayed on as a stage hand and worked there for about 2 years. By that time he was a producer even though he was still only 20. "It all happened very quickly," he said, "Because it was a period of very rapid expansion in American tv and Philadelphia was at the cantre of it. Eventually all the companies moved out to Hollywood but from 1948 to 1952 Philadelphia had a very good innings.

"At one point I wes working on 12 different networked programmes a week. It was slave labour really. We all worked round the clock. On Sundays I worked as a puppet handler on something called *In the Park*. There was a man on a park bench with some animals that were arm puppets. I would crouch behind the wall and change the puppets around, and if the crow had to smoke I was the one blowing smoke up its bum with a tube.

"All these shows were live, of course, and the sound was always a problem especially with the westerns. We had to hide the microphones all over the place – under bushes, behind cactuses etc. Once a horse bit a microphone in two during a love scene and people rang up the station to find out what the hall had happened."

When he turned 21 Laster gave up liva tv and set off around the world, aarning money – but not much of it – by playing pianos in bars or guitars in streets. He arrived, broke, in England at tha beginning of 1955. "I only came here because everyone spoke English. I knew that I couldn't earn a proper living in a non-English speaking country. I never really intended to stay but than I met a few people who were involved in fairly interasting work – they were just beginning in tv, or the theatre, playwriting or acting – and living a Bohemian kind of life and suddenly I falt *at home* with this group of people whose thinking seamed to click with mine."

So he stayed. And very quickly things started happaning for him. First, thanks to his tv experience, he was hired by one of the then new commercial tv companies, ARTV, to train British tv directors and this led to an opportunity of doing his own tv show. He was still only 23.

"It was ona in a serias of live half-hour programmes and I parformed it ad-lib with a then out-of-work actor called Alun Owen. It was called modastly enough, *The Dick Lester Show* and it went out just before Christmas – between *Dregnet* and commercial tv's first pantomime – so we got the third highest rating in the country because people didn't bother to switch off. The show itself was totally incomprehensible and the critical reaction was absolutely terrible but Peter Sellers saw it and decided it was either a piece of sheer surrealistic ganuis of sheer rubbish. He suggested we should meet and it turnad out we got along very wall togather. And so we davisad the first of the TV Goon Shows.

"We did three series: *Idiot's Weekly, A Show Called Fred* and *Son of Fred*. I just directed the series, I didn't write any of them. They were written by Spike Milligan and Eric Sykes, along with a group that included Terry Nation, Johnny Speight, John Antrobus, John Junkin and Dave Fraeman. Most of them had never writtan before. We did some marvellous things in the show and it had amazing critical acclaim but unfortunately, because it was live, none of them were ever recorded."

It was after doing *Son of Fred* that Lester's Australian interlude occurred. When he returned to England he met up with Michael Bentine and started writing for him, as well as directing his tv shows and acting in his radio programmes. He also resumed his friendship with Peter Sellers and together they came up with the idea for *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film*. "One Sunday we just went out into a field with Peter's camera, some stolen props and shot the film. We were all in it – our friends, Peter's chauffeur – and we made it for £70. We put it together in Sellers' room on his drum kit with a small editing machine."

The 11 minute Goon comedy soon acquired a cult reputation, helped by many good raviews, and ended up being nominated for an Oscar. All this served to convince Lester that directing films was where his future lay rather than with talevision. And then shortly afterwards he was given his first chance to direct a feature – by none other than **Starburst**'s old friend Milton Subotsky.

"They gave me a 22 page script for *It's Trad, Dad!* which I thought was the outline but turned out to be the *whole* shooting script. And so off I went. I got the offer only 2 or 3 weeks before shooting was due to start and we had to shoot it all within 3 weeks so we moved fast. We shot about 35 or 36 different musical numbers – a lot of Trad bands, Dixieland bands, like Acker Bilk, Chris Barber, Humphrey Littleton, George Melly – and we had Helen Shapiro and Craig Douglas, the Singing Milkman . . .

"During the shooting the Twist suddenly became the current dance craze in the States so I said to the producer, wouldn't it be a terrific idea for our final sequence if we could show everyone doing the Twist instead of jitterbugging. We'd be the first movie to have it. And I said we could go over and shoot some of these new artists in America. And the producers said – Great, *if* you'll pay your own way over. So I had to pay my own fara over to New York. We shot 2½ days with Chubby Checker, the king of the Twist, then went racing back to England and stuck him in the film. More or less just opened the tin and thraw the footage in . . ."

It's Trad, Dad! racaived some good reviews and in spite of costing only £60,000 ended up as Columbia's third most successful film of 1962. It was this achievement that was mainly responsible for Lester getting the assignment to direct *A Hard Day's Night*. "It came about for rather sordid reasons. United Artists wanted to do a quick exploitation film of the Beatles and knew I had done a quick musical exploitation film so they asked me."

A Hard Day's Night was, of course, a tremendous success making not only a fortune a tha box office but also attracting critical acclaim. Suddenly Richard Lester was famous . . .

The next few years were extremely good for him, both professionally and personally but towards the end of the 1960s things want sour. First a planned project with controversial playwright Joe Orton, which would have starred Mick Jagger, had to be abandoned when Orton was murdered by his lover. As an alternative Lester quickly made *The Bed-Sitting Room*, a black comedy set in England after World War 3. This turned out to be the least successful of all his movies. "It never even played in the States. United Artists sent out a publicity sheet saying something like: 'This movie is so funny few people will understand it.' A *great* piece of copy. They didn't even give it a press show in the States because they thought the reviews would be bad. It did play on one cinema in New York and *Time* magazine gave it a rare review but by the time the review came out the pictura was already off."

Lester then endured a depressing period when one project after another collapsed beneath him. First of these was *Send Him Victorious* about a right-wing take over of Britain and the kidnapping of Prince Charles. "We were about 4 or 5 weeks from shooting when United Artists withdrew the money. I then tried to set it up myself which bankrupted me and that was the end of it." Lester then wastad a year preparing for a film based on the first *Flashman* novel which was to have starred John Alderton (years later Lester made *Royal Flash* with Malcom McDowell). Again United Artists pulled their money out almost at the last moment. Other projects followed but, " . . . I just couldn't get them going. I couldn't get finance. For all practical purposes, for the pictures I wanted to do, I was unemployable. And the pictures I was *offered* by both major studios and independents were so horendous I couldn't touch them . . ."

But finally he was offered and assignment he felt he could accept. It came from Alexander and Ilya Salkind and concerned their proposed film version of *The Three Musketeers*. ►

The subsequent enormous success of the film, and its sequel, and the fact that Lester enjoyed a good working relationship with the Salkinds (who were impressed by the way he could shoot a big picture fast and economically) led to his being brought in as an associate producer on *Supermen* when the film ran into production difficulties in 1977. Then, with the sequel, he took over as director from Richard Donner. Having heard Donner's version of these events [see **Starburst 35**] I asked Lester his side of the story:

"Well, speaking from the producer's point of veiw rather than for myself, they had, rightly of wrongly, budgeted *Supermen* at a certain price and it went *four* times over that cost. And they were having to find the money themselves, they weren't being backed by Warner Brothers. Originally Warners were just taking the film on a pick-up basis but as the Salkinds ran out of money Warners would say, 'Okay, wa'll put this bit in and bail you out but in exchenge we want this territory and that one; we want television rights, etc." And they got *everything* of Part 1. The Salkinds made *no* money from this huge money-making film . . .

"Now they had budgeted the film in the beginning on the basis that it would be shot in Rome by Guy Hamilton. When Dick Donner took over he wasn't particularly experienced in special effects films and it was a question of: Do we fly Superman with wires? Travelling mattes or front projection? Each of those things requires a different system and a different budgeting. In the end the film shot for almost 2 years and cost an enormous amount. Then Donner gave a statement to *Variety* saying that he was not going to work with these "bums" again; that if he was going to continue on *Superman 2* he would have complete control and the producers were going to have to listen to him. And since the Salkinds were putting their own money up again and had already spent this enormous amount without any return they said, Well, no . . .

"And they came to me and asked me to direct it and I said no, they want to Guy Hamilton again and he said no and then they came back to me and I finally agreed to do it."

Wasn't the original idea to shoot both Parts 1 and 2 at the same time? "Yes, but when I became involved as a producer one of the first things I suggested was that there was no point in shooting the sequel simultaneously if they didn't have the money to finish the first film. Or that first film wasn't going to be *good* enough to warrant a sequel because the money was being spent on Part 2. So I said forget Part 2 and just try to make Part 1 sensational. Husband all your effects for the first film – even take the ending and use it for 1 because it's a better ending. Do everything you can to make Part 1 *good* . . .

"But what you're leading up to is the question of how much of Part 2 was shot during Part 1. Roughly speaking I think 17% of Part 2 had already been shot, of which Donner shot about 9 or 10% because remember there was some thing like six directors working on Part 1 with various different units. John Glen shot a lot of 1, so did John Barry, the production designer, Peter Duffell, Andre de Toth . . .

"And there was a lot of footage for 2 shot during 1 that we didn't use. We took a lot of sequences out and rewrote them, putting in new characters even. It was all very complex. Some footage was revoiced, some was reshot using doubles. It's very difficult to say precisely what was what in 2. That's the good thing about it, I think. The last thing one wanted was a film where they said, 'Ah, that sequence comes from *Supermen 1* and that sequence is one of Lester's . . .' Because then I would have really failed."

But overall I thought *Supermen 2* had a different *style* to 1. How had Lester achieved this? "I think a lot of that is to do with the editing – the *tempo* of the editing and the removal of excess was as much the reason for the difference in style as the rewriting. I was only able to rewrite half the script of 2 and there were things we just couldn't change. They were forced upon us by the other film. The costumes, for instance, and the cast. I'm not saying I was disappointed by the latter. Nobody forces someone like Gene Hackman on you. It was a wonderful opportunity to work with him . . ."

Superman 3 is the first of the *Superman* movies that Lester will have had full control over. Does that mean it will be more of a "Richard Lester Film?"

"There's no point in making a unique and personalised film as *part* of the Superman series. You have to remain faithful to the legend, to its generic roots . . . you are faced with the fact, for instance that he is invulnerable except for the following caveats – Kryptonite, etc – and that he had to behave in a certain manner given a certain set of circumstances. There are only so many powers with which he is endowed; you can't invent a new one without the written permission of D.C. Comics. So in that way you are very limited.

"But 3 *will* be different in some ways because I think a change was needed. In the first one it was – Can you make a man fly convincingly; the second one was—Okay, we've seen him fly now let's see him *do* something; and with the third it's—Okay, we've seen all *that*, now come up with something different. And I hope we've done just that. For example, this one starts in an unemployment office which is out of the style of the other two. I mean nobody cared about how Lois Lane, a working reporter, paid for her penthouse apartment in Part 1 whereas 3 starts in this mid-town American unemployment office situated in an obviously depressed State. I wanted to start small and go back to Middle America – to Smallville itself, Superman's hometown. So I think 3 has a bigger element of reality than the others."

Had there been any pressure on Lester to top the special effects featured in Part 2? "I knew that if we tried to do that we would lose because I don't think it was possible to top them. I mean we practically destroyed New York in Part 2 – how do you top that? And you only have a certain number of tricks you can do with Superman anyway – there's always a problem of scale with him. You can't have him pick up an oil tanker or an ocean liner, it just looks silly. He can just about get away with a bus. So you have to know what you can do with him and that limits you a great deal. Also I didn't want to do anything in 3 that had e space or extraterrestrial quality to it. I felt strongly we should be earthbound in 3. That's why we decided to start the smallest way we could in the movie – we very nearly started with e shot of a matchbox. In fact we finish the first scene on a matchbox and then slowly build up to a big sequence in the Grand Canyon."

In the past Lester's films have tended to be relatively small ones in terms of budgets end shooting schedules. Was it difficult for him to adjust to working on a big movie with lots of elaborate special effects? "It was when I became e producer on 1, after they'd been shooting on it for a while, that I realized I was so blissfully ignorant about what is possible with special effects today. I'm on record as saying I deliberately took on 2 as a director as a means of on-site training – a youth opportunities scheme for an old director – and I learned without e doubt *more* out of making 2 than during ell the other 18 films I'd made. I genuinely feel I'm e much better film maker now because of the Superman movies.

"Also I'd always made my films in a kind of smash and grab manner working totally on my nerves, trying to get a burst of exuberence or panic or hysteria going amongst crew, actors and myself and literally dragging everybody along out of nervousness. Well, that's fine when you've got e 4 or 6 weak shoot and you're 30 years old but I'm 51 and *Superman 3* was e 15 week shoot. You can't roar around for 15 weeks. So I've had to learn to work in a more straight forward

craftsman-like way, which has been good for me."

On the subject of special effects I asked if they had presented any problems during the making of 3: "There are *always* problems with the flying scenes, and there are always problems with model work . . ." Were any new techniques tried out for the flying this time? "No, it's the same mixture as before – wires, pole-arm, travelling mattes, models . . ."

Is there much model work in 3? "Yes, there has to be in a *Superman* film. You can't create the kind of mayhem that a *Superman* requires with just real life action – you always have to use extensive model work. There was en amazing amount of model work in 2 that no one noticed. The middle western town that the villains from Krypton attack was mainly models – the street was a series of reduced-in-scale miniatures getting smaller into the distance. I told you I'm learning quickly about special effects! Much of New York was done with models, even the Eiffel Tower was a model."

And did he like by Derek Meddings, but he was absent from 3? "Yes. We desperately wanted to have him on the film but when we started work he guaranteed us he would be finished on *Krull* in May but he was still there at Christmas. They are 9 months over on models. We kept waiting for him and everytime he thought he was getting out from under they'd throw more things at him for him to do. He's a responsible chap so he won't leave the film until he feels it's finished.

"One of the things I achieved as producer on 1, apart from smiling at everyone, was to bring Derek Meddings and Paul Wilson together and form e new model unit. Paul had worked with me as a camera operator and lighting cameraman for years – he was with me on *A Hard Day's Night*– and I'm a great fan of his and he suddenly found with Derek e wonderful partnership.

"Colin Chilvers, who supervised the mechanical effects on 1 & 2, is doing the model effects on 3, In fact he's doing everything – he's supervising all the effects and doing a marvellous job."

And how expensive was 3 compared to the other two? "It cost less. But it's difficult to judge really. The first one cost an enormous amount and in a sense subsidised part of the budget of 2 so it's hard to say exactly what I spent shooting 2. Part 2's budget is high but I think it would come out less than either of the first two . . ."

We moved to the subject of the cast. Was Christopher Reeve still enjoying the role? "I think we found a few things in it that allowed him to spread himself a little. I think he found things to play in the character in 3 which he didn't play before. But this will be his last one. He says it is and I *hope* it is. I've told him I think he should stop for his own sake, / certainly will stop with 3, and so are the writers. So if the series continues there's going to have to be a mejor rethink about it. I don't know – if someone came into this office right now and said to me, 'If you do another *Superman* we'll let you do 5 films of your own choice . . .' which is the most appealing thing you can say to a director, I'm not sure what my answer would be. But I don't think I could convincingly come up with a storyline and enough original ideas for what the Man in Blue could do next, so I think it should stop . . "

Probably the most unusual piece of casting in 3 is black comedien Richard Pryor as the villain. How did Pryor who has a reputation for having a hair-trigger temper, react to working on this type of movie? "I really don't know. He's been very *nice* about us whenever he's talked about the film. But I think he'd made e lot of films in a row end it was hard for him. He is physically very weak. He's still suffering from the after-effects of his fire accident. Very much so, in fact. He can give you the illusion of fitness because he has wonderful energy but I think he's reached the point where he really just wants to sit down and hide for a while.

"He's a marvellously interesting man and performer and I liked him very much but I can see the despair and the danger and I certainly wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of him. But he's one of the most fascineting people I've ever met."

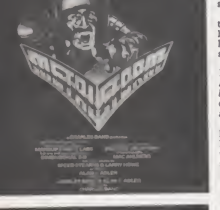
Finally, what presented the biggest problem during the making of *Superman 3*? "I think the big problem was again balance. The balance between the different elements. You don't want people to come out saying the film was a Richard Pryor number – a showcase for him. Nor do you want them to say, Oh yes, just more bits of flying and blowing things up. I'm banking on the fact that the *story* reads more interestingly. I *hope* it's a better story. I may have failed totally in directing it but I think the story as we wrote it was more interesting and has a greater reality then the other two. And in fact it was based on e *true* story . . . That's whet it has that the others didn't. A stronger sense of reality." ●

Editor's Foreword: *"The Ackermonster", as readers of* **Starburst** *may or may not be aware, is Hollywood born-&-bred* Forrest J Ackerman, *who remembers seeing his first "imagi-movie" (his term) at age 5½ in 1922, and for the next 60 years has unquestionably seen more films of the fantastic than anyone on this planet ("or several others," he adds). He even saw – and numerous times – the second British talking film,* High Treason, *Gaumont's 1929 vision of war narrowly averted in 1940, a lost film (except for a* silent *French version in the cinemathèque of Brussels) which virtually none of our own countrymen are acquainted with. Forry Ackerman (as he prefers to be called) tells us that Raymond Massey had a visible bit part in the film, "more than a lustrum before he became John/Oswald Cabal in* The Shape of Things to Come." *Mr Ackerman is credited with creating the seminal cinemagazine of the fantastic from which all others have grown,* Famous Monsters of Filmland, *which he successfully edited for 190 issues till his resignation in late 1982 and the prompt demise of the periodical. Since that time he has been doing occasional special features for fantasy-oriented motion picture periodicals and creating special books in the genre such as* Lon of 1000 Faces! *(published on Chaney Sr's 100th birthday and featuring 1000 stills of the Master of Makeup) and* Beauties and the Beasts *(Kong and Fay Wray, Frankenstein and Mae Clarke, Dr Moreau and the Panther Woman, et al). In commemoration of the 15th year since the demise of Boris Karloff, he will release a revised and enlarged version of* The Frankenscience Monster *February 2, 1983. In the meantime, he is at work writing the definitive feature on his favourite film of all time,* Metropolis. *In 1969, at the worldwide science fiction film festival held in Rio de Janeiro, after a showing of Fritz Lang's masterpiece the renowned director was invited to the stage to speak about his classic. Instead he rose, put his hand on the shoulder of his companion seated next to him, and said: "Anything you want to know about* Metropolis, *ask Forry Ackerman – he knows more about it than I do!" When completed, Mr Ackerman's piece on* Metropolis *will be featured in 2 parts in future issues of* **Starburst.**

In the meantime, fasten your seatbelts for a kaleidoscopic preview of "things to come on the silver screen." Forry Ackerman, paraphrasing Bette Davis, promises: "It's going to be a jumpy ride!"

HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD!

By The Ackermonster



IF HALF THE FILMS I'm going to tell you about are actually made, and if you see a quarter of them, you're not going to have time in the next 12 months to eat, sleep . . . or read **Starburst**!

A mechanical Frankenstein and three Cyclopes (Cyclopsi?), so I'm told by the crew working at Makeup Effect Labs in Hollywood, will be featured in a scientifilmy clept *Metalstorm*.

Stanley Kubrick has purchased a 1969 sci-fi story by England's own Brian Aldiss, *Supertoys Last All Summer Long*. Kubrick & Aldiss are currently collaborating on elaborating the original story.

Last year when I was in Rome and being given a tour of the studio where Lou "The Incredible Hulk" Ferrigno was soon to emote in *Hercules*, I suggested to director Luigi Cozzi that perhaps the picture should be called *HULKules*. Do you suppose that's why the Mafia has been on my tail ever since? Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing a different *Hercules*. Columbia Pictures International will release another spaghetti fantasy, Bruno Mattei's *The 7 Magnificent Gladiators*.

Miles (*Ator*) O'Keefe teams up with Sean (*Zardoz*) Connery for a fantasy film, *Sword of the Valiant*.

A new name to reckon with in the imagi-movie field is Helen Sarhi, who will be presenting *The Lost City, Mission Phantom, Adam & Eve, The Invincible Barbarian, The Death Angel, Unconscious, Absurd*, another adventure of *Ator*, and an After Atomigeddon barbarian thriller, *Endgame*.

Before the Dawn of Time there was . . . *Ator*. And Kodiak Films has captured his heroic saga on film.

Ray Bradbury is working on the John Boorman project to bring the famous fantasticartoon *Little Nemo* to the screen.

Great Rock 'n' Roll Time Machine will be produced by Mace Neufield & Irving Azoff and directed by David Acomba, and *L. Ron Hubbard* has completed a comic time-travel script currently seeking a producer.

L. Ron Hubbard has also written an original screenplay, *Revolt in the Stars*. The introduction to the shooting script reads, in part: *All great science fiction and fantasy have social significance* – Things to Come *by Wells, Swift's* Gulliver's Travels, *Huxley's* Brave New World, *Orwell's* 1984. Revolt in the Stars *has similar impact and was written against social studies and surveys of contemporary society. It is even faster in pace than* Star Wars *and* Jaws. *The story opens with the discovery of a time capsule on Earth in modern times. The contents of the capsule, viewed as a motion picture, reveal the ancient history of a space civilisation of which Earth was once a part. The atmosphere of the film is extensive pageantry and science fiction clichés are avoided. Three major characters are Xenu, Supreme Ruler of the Galactic Confederation; Lady Min, greatest actress in the Galaxy; and Rawl, Loyal Officer commanding Earth Base.* Coincidence or design that "Rawl" is the initials of Robert A.W. Lowndes, one of the scientifiction author/editors to whom Hubbard dedicates his bestselling saga of the year 3000, *Battlefield Earth*?

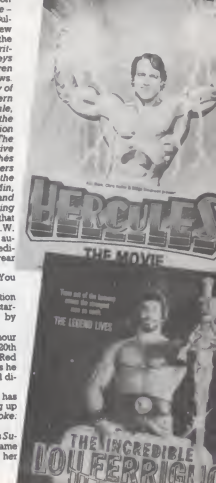
"The Nightmare Begins When You Wake Up . . . *Unhinged*."

The Prize of Peril is a futuristic action film directed by Yves Boisset and starring Gerard Lanvin from a story by Robert Sheckley.

The Flight of Dragons is a 2-hour animated cartoon feature about a 20th century man's quest to capture the Red Crown of Ommadon. In the process he encounters dragons, dungeons and diabolical wizards.

Rick Baker, Monster Maker, has completed his African stint making up extras to resemble apes for *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan*.

19-year-old Helen Slater portrays *Supergirl* in the Salkind's film of the same name. Faye Dunaway costars with her as Selina.



Didn't Hitchcock do it well enough with *The Birds*? Apparently Cannon International doesn't think so: on their upcoming slate of release, *Rebellion of the Birds*.

Playboy Productions has started production on *Tales at Midnight*.

Here's the hype on *Other Realms: When you look into a prism and wonder what may exist in the greater portion of the spectrum that is just out of sight, or when you walk along a beach and feel as though Time itself is rushing by you like the sea mist in the wind . . . When you stand in the rain and smell the dust while lightning is in concert with thunder, or when you run through hills of forests where noises echo from the shadows . . . When you pause on a cool, starlit night and wonder about all that cities slowly overhead while you sleep – then you're at the threshold of . . .* Other Realms.

Earth, Wind & Fire are among those groups providing music for the sf production *Rock & Rule*.

The Never Ending Story takes $28 million to tell its tale of magic adventure, a young man's odyssey in the past, drawn through the pages of a book into a timeless world of wonder, a legendary land of fantastic beings with whom he has concourse.

Shades of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Resurrection of Jimber-Jaw*; or, *The Iceman Cometh*. Or the silent Houdini serial of the 20s, *The Man From Beyond*. Mike Westmore has recently been spending 2½ hours daily making up John Lone as a Neanderthal man (and there was also a film by that name once upon a time) who's cut out of a chunk of ice. A la the caveman in *Quest for Fire*, a language is being devised for the prehistoric *Iceman*.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Death is being directed by Steven Spielberg with locations in Sri Lanka (Arthur C. Clarke land) and Hong Kong, with interiors at EMI Elstree. Harrison Ford reprises his popular character and George Lucas is coexecutive producer.

All of Isaac Asimov's short stories not already sewn up elsewhere have been optioned by TV producer Sonny Fox for a video anthology along the lines of *The Twilight Zone* which he hopes to develop for network or cablevision.

I as film agent (*Deathrace 2000, I and Without A Face, The Professional Man, This Island Earth* and numerous other imagi-movies have been by clients of mine) – I as film agent was contacted after the major success of *Friday the 13th III* in 3D, the company looking for "a space-action followup trending itself graphically to 3D." As I showed them Harry Bates' *Space Hawk* and A.E. van Vogt's *Battle of Forever* and Ray Cummings' *Tarrano the Conqueror* and a variety of other sf works with exciting possibilities for 3D – and what did they select? The last I heard the next *Star Trek (In Search of Spock)* is to be in 3D! Keep on reading and before the end I'll list *all* the scientifictional projects (and horror flicks) that are announced for 3-dimensional filming.

Stephen King's *Carrie*, several seasons ago a hit horror film, has been optioned for a Broadway musical. Veteran Curt Siodmak (*F.P.1 Doesn't Answer, TransAtlantic Tunnel, The Wolf Man, Riders to the Stars, The Magnetic Monster, Donovan's Brain* – 3 versions, and [TV] *Hauser's Memory*; recipient of a Gernsback Pioneer Award for 1926 for *The Eggs from Lake Tanganyika*) – Curt Siodmak has constructed a musical version of *Frankenstein* for the legitimate theater, is seeking backers for same to the "tune" of $10 million. He also has an unusual variation in playform on the *Jack the Ripper* theme.

The scientifimasterpiece *Metropolis* is scheduled for a 70mm revival. Is Abel *(End of the World)* Gance's *Napoleon*. I'm told there are to be a minumum of 6 songs. Frankly, this is something that I can't envision; it seems like sacrilege to me. I hope they don't plan to make fun of it with lyrics like "Ro, Ro, Ro Your Bot", "Roweing Ze Brain", "Big City Blues", "And They Call the Tin 'Maria'", etc. Fritz Lang & Thea von Harbou would haunt 'em – and so would I!

Space is a place where you never hear the winds of war. But CBS/TV has invested more than three-quarters of a million dollars in James Michener's best-selling novel, preparatory to bringing it to the video screen in a 6 to 10-hour-long miniseries.

First they asked Ray Bradbury to write a sequel to *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. He did. They said it would be too expensive to produce. On spec, I wrote an outline myself. It wasn't what they were looking for. (I had the son of Klaatu come back about a quarter of a century later to check up on how we were behaving.) They said they had abandoned the idea of a sequel and were simply going to remake the original with state-of-the art effects. The latest I hear is that the *daughter* of Klaatu comes to Earth and meets the grownup son of the character played by Patricia Neal in the original 'SF' version. David Engelbach will write and direct for 20th Century-Fox.

Why so many remakes when so many remakes are crying to be born in the Realm of Unwrought Things? Now *The 10th Victim* (based on Robert Sheckley's *The 7th Victim*) is coming back. No, not as *The 15th Victim* (inflation) but *Fair Game*.

A June shooting is scheduled for *None of the Above*. Known better in England as the banned book *Big Jack Barron* by Norman Spinrad. Script by Harlan Ellison.

Following *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott's next project has been announced as *Legend of Darkness*.

92-year-old Sam Jaffe will star (together with Dan Ackroyd & Bill Murray) in *Nothing Lasts Forever*. Perhaps this should be collbilld with *It's Not the End of the World – Is It?*

Charles Nuetzel is scripting Rex Ravelle's *Earthlings and Other Gods*.

The horror clique's pet vets (veterans, not veterinarians) Christopher Lee & John Carradine costar in *Safari 3000*. *Grand Prix 2000* will be the sequel to Ib J. Melchior's *Deathrace 2000*.

Spine-fi (a chiller in the sf vein) is promised in *The Sender*, starring Kathryn Harrold.

From Inja will come *The Bogeyman*.

Paul (*The Beast Within*) Clemens calls this columnist to tell me he has collaborated on a final *Dr Phibes* script that has elicited a most enthusiastic response from Vincent Price. (He read Price's handwritten message to me over the phone. Price concluded: "I'm ready to make it!") There is also a major role in it for Christopher Lee. Clemens told me the entire plot and I too am enthusiastic about it but sworn to secrecy. Clemens is currently using a well known Hollywood personality (also a friend of mine) for $37 million dollars on a plagiarized property claim and doesn't want a premature revelation in the press of his latest plot. A previous script, *The Brides of Phibes*, remains unmade: sad from my grandpoint because I decided to get a trip to England out of it to play a party mistaken for Phibes. (I got torn limb from tree in the script. I always did wear my heart on sleeve of parts.) New screenplay bears the title *The 7 Fates of Dr Phibes*.

A new Space Age hero is promised in *Capt Victory and the Galactic Rangers*.

James Polakof's ebon chiller, *Dark Eyes*, has taken a title change to Satan's Mistress. Authentic Jamaican voodoo rites are promised in *The Picnic*.

A Confederate soldier becomes a ghoul in *The Curse of the Screaming Dead*. You may have heard of this one under other shooting titles: *The Fury of the Succubus* and *Demon Rage*.

Comicharacters scheduled to take on 3 dimensions from the comix and enact their adventures on the screen include *Capt America, Spiderman, Batman, Iron Man, Daredevil, The Spirit, Sheena of the Jungle, The Fantastic Four* and *Mandrake the Magician*.

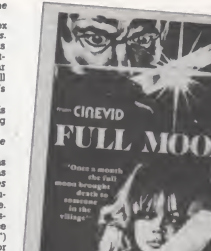
The Devil you say forthcoming from Hales, *Devil of the Island, Children of the Devil, The Imp* and *The Devil's Macabre Hand*. All 007 (Sean Connery) has to say about this spate of devilish films is, *Never Say Never Again*.

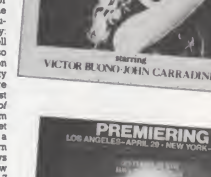
A remake that might have defied even HG Wells' enormous imagination: *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* . . . starring Richard Pryor!

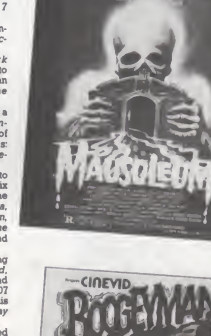
Kirk (*Superman*) Alyn, Carroll (*Mark of the Vampire*) Borland, Ann (*War of the Worlds*) Robinson and I all have parts in Fred Olen Ray's horror melodrama *Scalps*. I play one of my own pseudonyms, (Prof) Fisher Trentworth.

They tell me there's a role for me in *Blood Feast II* but I dunno. I'm not a great fan of gornific flicks. True, Karloff, Lugosi, Chaney Jr. and Lee have all appeared in atrociously embarrassing pictures; but, then I don't depend on acting for a living and don't know to how low a level I care to sink for the sake of egoboo. Perhaps if *Blood Feast II* is an outrageous farce – ("May the farce be with you, Forry!")

Geek Maggot Bingo, filmed in "Monsterama", will be notable for the resurfacing of John Zacherley, in the late 50s and early 60s a popular







Ghost Host of American terrorvision. In addition to "Zach" there's a creature inspired by a Gahan Wilson creation, and the Formaldehyde Man, who demonstrates that 2 heads are worse than 1.

John Badham's back and *The Star Man* described as a sci-fi love story, is his current directorial stint, due for Xmas release.

Shepperton Studios becomes Romania, 1941, for Michael Mann's cinemadaptation of F. Paul Wilson's Gothic novel *The Think*.

There's off-&-on talk about a sequel to the popular vampire spoof *Love at First Bite: Love at Second Bite*. Other announced spoofs include *It Ate Cleveland* (monster mania), and *Pandemonium* (horrific hilarity) and *Uforia* (flying saucer farce).

Some*THINGS* Wicked This Way Come – a veritable Horrorama, a kaleidoscope of Creature Features, Monster Mashes, Space Operas, Gentilfims, Terror Tales, Swordceryarns, Fanta-Farces and Imagi-Movies of all descriptions.

The Twilight Zone . . . Dead Zone, the Stephen King book which David (*Scanners*) Cronenberg will bring to the screen as director . . . *Adventures in the Crypt*.

The Aftermath, with myself as the curator of the last museum on Earth after World War 3 has destroyed civilization . . . *Angel of H.E.A.T. . . . Anthrophagous* . . . Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*.

Beastlres (marking the directorial debut of Stan Winston, whose makeup for *Heartbeeps* earned him an Academy Award nomination in '82. Among the monsters will be a creature 11½ feet tall) . . . *Fiend Without a Face . . . Thunder* . . . with Roy (Jaws) Scheider . . . *Brain, Brainwaves, Brainwash* and Brainstorm . . . The Black Room (the title, in 1935, of a Karloffilm in which BK played twins) . . . *The Dark Room . . . Bayou . . . Bottom*, wherein a fallen Angel decides to raise a little Hell on Earth . . . *Blood Sample, Bloodbeat* and *Bloodrot . . . Bloody Pulp . . . Blackout . . . Black Magic*.

Christine, a Stephen King horror thriller of a demonic used automobile that points the moral, "You can't be too carful" . . . *The Creature Wasn't Nice . . . Creepers*, with Joss Ackland . . . *The Control . . . Cataclysm . . . Christmas Evil . . . Crazy Boys vs. Drakula Jr . . . Cannibals in the Street* (John Saxon, formerly known as *Virus, The Slaughterers, Savage Apocalypse* and *Invasion of the Flesh Hunters*) . . . *The Canis Terror . . . The Cold Room . . . Castle Terror . . . The Capture of Bigfoot . . .* and Stephen King's beast-snarling *Cujo . . . A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (John Landis project).

Dark Games . . . Demon Shock . . . The Demonsville Terror . . . The Devil Maser . . . Dune . . . Duel . . . Deadspace . . . The Devil and the Deadly . . . Dreamscape . . . The Dark Tower . . . Dr Jekyll's Dungeon of Death.

Easter Sunday . . . El Animal, Argentina-based sci-fi 2-hour theatrical feature plus 10 one-hour followups for TV . . . *Exterminators of the Year 3000*.

Full Moon with John Carradine and Victor Buono, and *Full Moon High* (werewolfilm) . . . *Frankenstein's Island* with Robert (*The Hideous Sun Demon*) Clarke . . . *The Four-Sided Triangle* (new version of the Wm. F. Temple classic).

The Giant Centipede . . . The Ghost, The Bigoted Ghost (TV), *Ghostkeeper, Ghost Smasher* and *Ghosts Galore . . . Gremlin*, directed by Joe (*The Howling*) Dante.

The Hunter . . . Haunted House . . . Home Sweet Home . . . The Hitchhiker. Hitchcock/Serling-type 3-hour TV anthology series based on *The Tales of the Crypt* mysteries . . . *The Horror Star* (Ferdy Mayne, with props and posters from the Ackermuseum of Fantasy Films) and *Horror Movie*, not to be confused with *The Last Horror Movie* (which was confusing enough) . . . *Hysterical . . . House of the 7 Tombs*.

Harry Harrison's *Invasion: Earth. Jaws of Satan*.

The Keep . . . The Kid with the 200 IQ . . . Krull . . . The Killing Hour, Killing Time and *The Killing Touch . . . King Kong's Illegitimate Son* (what a beauty idea).

The Lightning Map (biolfilm of electrical genius Nikola Tesla).

Mystery of the Third Planet (Russian) . . . *The Monster in the Closet . . . The Monster from Out of Town . . . Mental Case . . . The Miracle Fighters . . . The Missing Link . . . Mausoleum . . . Mortuary . . . Midnight . . . Mr Boo*.

Night in the Crypt, Night Journey and *Nightkill. Ondine. Play Dead . . . Pigs . . . Pieces*.

Rattler (son of *The Reptile* and *Ssssssss?*) . . . *Rats . . . The Return of the Extra Terrestrials . . . The predators*, a fantasy about aliens effecting prehistoric times . . . *Replicants . . . Revenge of the Ninja*.

Slime . . . Spasm . . . Starstruck (no relation to the telefilm in which I appeared as an alien astronaut) . . . *Star Chamber . . . Star Bright* (Martin Caidin novel) . . . *Star 80 . . . Silence, Silent Death, The Slayer* and *Scream of the Soul . . . Spinal Tap . . . The Sword & the Fire . . . The Stand* (Stephen King strikes again!) . . .

Strange Invaders . . . Space Raiders . . . Stalker (Strugatsky bros. sf novel) . . . *Silicione* (?) . . . *The Scarecrow* and *The Scaremaker . . . Secret of the Mummy, The Secret of Yolanda* (Israeli) and *Secrets of the Phantom Caverns*.

2010: Arthur C. Clarke's *Space Odyssey Two . . . Trauma . . . Turkey Shoot* (future) . . . *There Once Was A Child . . . Terror on Tour . . . Teenage Monster Rumble* (Don Glut script) . . . *Time Guardian* (Mike Jittov wizardry for TV) . . . *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* (sf) . . . *The Test . . . Thunderball*.

The Uninvited, Visitors from the Galaxy (a Yugoslavian spoof of *Alien*) . . . "V" – 50 UFOs, each 3 miles in diameter, invade Earth in a 4-hour miniseries for TV. Marc (*Beastmaster*) Singer stars.

The Windhurst Terror . . . Wacko . . . Warrior of the Lost World . . . Wavelength.

Psycho II, Creepshow II, Tron II, Conan II, Boogeyman II, Quest for Fire II, Superman III and possibly an *Omen IV*.

Last Scene of All: It has been possible in the past to see such sf literary personalities on the screen as Fritz Leiber (*Equinox*), Charles Beaumont and William F. Nolan (*The Intruder*), Richard Matheson (*Somewhere in Time*), myself (*The Howling, Schlock, Queen of Blood, Dracula vs. Frankenstein, The Time Travellers*), Stephen King in *Creepshow*. Now no less a personage than *Arthur C. Clarke* will make his acting debut as Virginia Woolf's husband (!) in the cinemadaptation of "The Village in the Jungle".

As the Creature from the Black Lagoon said: Time . . . marshes on!

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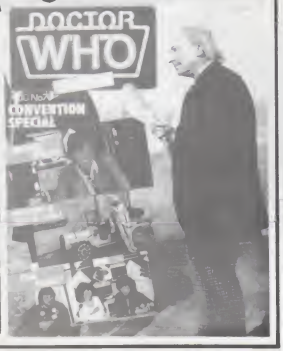

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1. Name the tv show which marked Steven Spielberg's professional screen debut. Was it:

   a) *Twilight Zone*
   b) *Night Gallery*
   c) *Dallas*

2. What was the name given to the mechanical shark by the film crew during the making of *Jaws?*

   a) Bill
   b) Ben
   c) Bruce

3. Which of the following catch-phrases was popularised by Spielberg's film *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial?*

   a) "E.T.'s finger on fire!"
   b) "E.T. phone home!"
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SPIELBERG COMPETITION

Doctor Who Celebration

Report by Richard Holliss

Every summer for over ten years the BBC has held an exhibition of *Doctor Who* props and costumes at Longleat in Wiltshire, the stately home of the Marquess of Bath. It seemed therefore that here was an ideal place with its spacious gardens and huge parking facilities for a special convention to be housed, celebrating twenty years of the worlds most famous space traveller. Months of planning led to the event which culminated in two full days, the 3rd and 4th of April, 1983 and gate attendances totalled 70,000 people.

On arriving by car on the Sunday morning, the queues into Longleat were already extending back into the main roads around the Estate. However the efficiency of the gate attendants meant a reasonably speedy entry into the park and as you drove down the hill towards the house, you caught your first glimpse of the convention nestled behind a row of hedges and flanked by an already enormous queue of people. It immediately became obvious that the whole event looked a little squashed, even if the Cybermen, Daleks and dummy figure of Peter Davison at the entrance were well over life-size.

After parking in what seemed like aisle number 354 and row 48, it wasn't difficult to join the throng of people already heading into the Gardens. The programme book available in the ticket tent for 50p, gave a detailed map on the back cover showing the various attractions imperative to the *Doctor Who* fan. BBC Costume tents, Studio Sets and Merchandising areas were squeezed together, dwarfed on one side by the house and on the other by the half-mile lake.

Unfortunately the BBC had overlooked one very important point – the number of people who turned up. The tickets had originally been advertised through the post anything up to a couple of months beforehand but a lot of people had preferred to leave it to the weekend in case of bad weather and, as it was bright sunshine and blue sky, they arrived in droves.

Suddenly it was discovered that unlike the Doctor's TARDIS, which is much larger on the inside than on the outside, the crowds had swelled beyond a comfortable capacity. Queues were growing and most attractions, even when you finally reached them, were so packed it was impossible to have a good look round. Further ticket sales were suspended, which began to upset a lot of people and there were some angry scenes.

However, those lucky enough to be in the Garden were oblivious to the outside world as they mingled with celebrities and bought overpriced goods. In fact the only way a visitor would know that his fellow man was experiencing problems in seeking admission, was when the voice of K-9, magnificently handled by actor John Leeson, rang out over the heads of the multitude requesting that the unfortunate fans outside visit the house instead or go boating or take a train ride or do anything, rather than try getting into the **Doctor Who Celebration**. The cinema was screening the *Dalek Invasion Earth* story from the William Hartnell era.

Already a certain number were queueing outside the Orangery for the first autograph session. Elizabeth Sladen who played Sarah-Jane Smith during the Jon Pertwee era, Carole Ann Ford, the first ever companion for *Doctor Who* and John Nathan-Turner, the producer, were the first to wield pens for the happy masses.

The Merchandise tent was also the home of the auction where a massive number of *Doctor Who* props sat waiting to fall under the auctioneer's hammer. There was everything imaginable from *Eldrad's*

Head from *The Hand of Fear* to K-9's whistle.

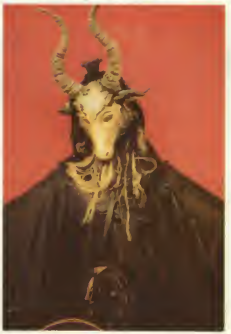
The BBC were present in full force with a Costume and Make-up Tent and a display of Visual Effects. These included beasts and monsters from *Doctor Who*, photo-displays of explosions, bizarre head-dresses and the usual array of paintings and drawings describing every minute detail of how an alien is created for the show. Other exhibits included spacecraft and weapons from *Blake's 7*, Marvin the paranoid android from *Hitchhikers* and, one of my personal favourites, a Triffid from the series *The Day of the Triffids*.

Opposite the Make-up tent was *Bessie*, the car that John Pertwee's Earthbound Doctor drove during the third reincarnation of the character. On the second day however, *Bessie* was moved outside the Gardens to the front of the house so that people could pose for photographs and thus amuse the waiting lines of visitors hoping to gain entrance.

Hidden behind the Topiary was the BBC's mobile Radiophonic Workshop where Dick Mills demonstrated some of the marvellous sound effects created for a single episode of *Doctor Who* and other BBC programmes. This was one event that it was easy to gain access to; perhaps its technical theme was too much for the majority of visitors.

From here I fought my way into the Forum Tent to listen to the first of many panel discussions. At one end of the tent was a raised platform on which stood a table and assorted chairs and microphones.

As John Nathan-Turner introduced the first panel, each actor stepped from out of the Tardis which the BBC has erected behind the table. Looking dedidedly battered from its very much terrestrial journey down the M4 motorway, it courageously stood in front of its admiring fans, doors opening on cue. The guests included, apart from the producer himself, Carole Ann Ford, Elizabeth ►



Sladen and John Leeson, the voice of K 9.

During these panels, producer John Nathan-Turner revealed some information about *The Five Doctors*, the **Doctor Who Special** scheduled for an autumn screening. "The cast will include," he began. There was tension throughout the tent, every ear strained to hear the next word.

"Jon Pertwee, Patrick Troughton, Peter Davison, Elizabeth Sladen, Nicholas Courtney, Carole Ann Ford, John Leeson, Wendy Padbury, Frazer Hines, Carolyn John, Richard Franklin, Philip Latham, Diana Sheridan and Richard Hurndall who will be playing the part of the William Hartnell Doctor."

"There will be unused material of Tom Baker and Lalla Ward from the story *Shada* but, apart from that, I'm not saying any more." Although he did add, due to one further question regarding Tom Baker's absence from the role, that it was due to the actor being unavailable for recording.

Meanwhile, the auction had got underway and it seemed appropriate to have a look at exactly what the people were bidding for. Everyone was handed an official looking list of props covering four sheets of paper. I was just amazed how the BBC had kept it all so secure over the years. Some items went back as far as the Patrick Troughton era. By the time I reached the tent, a large number of fans had already gathered and Jon Pertwee was in full swing as guest auctioneer. This was my first glimpse of the third Doctor and the present *Worzel Gummidge*.

Ian Levine who had prepared the prog ramme notes was on hand to help out. "What am I bid for Lot Number 10," Pertwee began, "The headgear for Sutekh's servant from the story *Pyramids of Mars*?" As I totally confused by what he had just said he continued "Do you all know what I'm talking about?" Everybody nodded. "I don't know what I'm talking about, although it is from a Tom Baker episode, isn't it?" Levine also nodded. Pertwee looked at it once more and then spat politely at the floor.

The bidding started at around £5.00 but soon rose to the final sale price of £29.00.

"Sold to the lady on my right, the lady jumping about like a Mexican bean." *Doctor Who* fans become very excited at auctions. Lot 11 was the Cyberleader's Head from *The Tomb of the Cybermen*, an early Patrick Troughton story. "Off we go," said Pertwee "Thirty Pounds to start." The bids rose fast and furious, a number of children in the crowd pocketed their five pound notes yet again in disappointment. We all watched helplessly as these great BBC papier mache artifacts filtered to the overseas visitors, another part of the great British Heritage lost abroad. "Fifty, Sixty, One Hundred Pounds." Pertwee shouted excitedly. Hands began to dart up and down at an alarming rate. "One Hundred and Forty, Fifty, Sixty – " Pertwee continued, "Two Hundred and Forty going once –" Panic set in on the face of Mr Levine. "Can you remind them," he whispered, forgetting the microphone was still switched on, "It's the only Cyber Helmet, the only one of its kind?" Feeling a little sorry for that poor individual, poised, pen in hand, ready to write out a cheque for £240, Pertwee ignored him. "They know what it is. Sold for Two Hundred and Forty Pounds to a chap from Australia." It certainly wasn't that warm in the auction tent but the fan from Down Under had been sweating buckets and looked very relieved when he finally got his hands on the only Cyberleader Helmet in existence.

Other items to be sold included; a Nimon head minus a horn to Mike Lake, one of the directors of Titan Distributors and organiser of the Merchandise Tent's best display; an Ice Warrior claw; some **Blake's 7** costumes and Tom Baker's coat, rumoured to have fetched £850.

It was announced that Patrick Troughton had arrived, so the next port of call was the panel discussion to hear his views on the character he played. On the way to the Forum tent, it was very difficult to stop myself from having my photograph taken standing next to another BBC TARDIS. Although it did set me wondering, which was the real one, the one here on the tennis court or the one in the tent. Any illusions I once had were being shattered one at a time.

Patrick Troughton has been in the acting profession since 1938 and took over as the Doctor from William Hartnell in 1966, his first adventure featuring everyone's favourite villains – the Daleks. As these metallic pepper pots were still commanding a cult following amongst the tv audience, Troughton's character took a back seat in the proceedings but as the series progressed he established a personality all of his own.

Troughton began by relating how he got the part of **Doctor Who**. "I was in Ireland making a film, when I received a phone call from the BBC Head of Drama asking me to consider the part of **Doctor Who**. I didn't fancy it at all but they insisted and each time the phone rang the money went up. I knew it would be difficult to follow Billy (William Hartnell) and because of this I was convinced the new series wouldn't last more than six weeks." At this point he paused and glanced at the faces of the eager fans from around the world. "Shows how wrong I can be." he smiled. "It was decided that I would approach the character in a rather clownish way. I had a wig which made me look like H. G. Wells and I took it down to the make-up department and put it on. Anneke Wills and Michael Craze, who were at that time the Doctor's resident companions Polly and Ben took one look and said 'Oh no, we're not going on with you looking like that.' I don't blame them really, it must have looked most strange. So it was scrapped. This was at the time of the Beatles, so my new hairstyle was fashioned on a Beatle haircut."

Troughton spoke of the great affection for the character he played for three seasons. "The serious parts had to be dead serious, you had to be scared, but a kind of comedy element crept in allowing the younger children to cope with the scenes of terror and fear, as long as you didn't send it up."

It was obvious that sooner or later someone was going to ask a question relating to the upcoming special. Everybody wanted to know if Troughton had found it difficult recreating the role as **Doctor Who** after so many years. "I fell into it straight away." he replied happily. He stopped to ask John Nathan-Turner the title. "Ah yes, *The Five Doctors* and we were all excited at being together again. In fact I met up with Frazer Hines recently and we had a good giggle." (Hines you may remember played Troughton's number one companion, Jamie) "He used to wear khaki shorts under his kilt because he was always shy about climbing up ladders."

Taking a well earned break from the Forum tent, I dropped in to see the display of **Doctor Who** Studio Sets. Apart from the TARDIS interior and the Chameleon robot which creaked into life giving the audience the feeling that something tremendous was about to occur, the most interesting sets on view were those from the forthcoming special and as every body in the know was keeping the story well under wraps, it was going to be the only glimpse of what was to come.

Back in the Forum tent, the panel discussion had already started with guests from the seventh season of **Doctor Who**, Richard Franklin, Nicholas Courtney and the third doctor himself, Jon Pertwee. This was probably one of the most enjoyable of all the panel forums, there was amarvellous feeling of companionship between the actors present and they spoke of the series as if it were yesterday.

Feeling quite exhausted as the day drew to a close, I left the sanctuary of the **Doctor Who Celebration** and returned to the hotel. On Monday morning the gates at Longleat were opened an hour earlier than advertised. Somehow the BBC must have hoped that it would prevent congestion compared to the day before. It

didn't. By mid-morning thousands of people had begun turned up. However the Press, who must have been thoroughly tired out trying to write articles on the previous day's events, hardly put in an appearance at all and so the poor lady in charge of the press room looked very lonely sitting in her large empty office, her only company being a plate of cold quiche and a pile of press kits.

The ticket booth opened with renewed enthusiasm but closed less than four hours later.

Feeling somewhat refreshed I once again braved the Orangery, this time to collect Peter Davison's autograph for **Starburst**. I was just in time; the present Timelord was to be seen scuttling over to the Forum tent for the next session. Managing to get ahead of him I caught the last few minutes of a discussion with Heather Hartnell, the widow of the first Doctor. Heather was a charming person and the **Who** fans paid her great respect by asking many sensible questions relating to her late husband's portrayal of their hero. She told how William Hartnell had been too busy to appear in the Dalek films but how he had thoroughly enjoyed himself working on the tv series.

It was then that John Nathan-Turner announced the arrival of the present Doctor and his companions, Mark Strick son, Janet Fielding, Anthonly Ainley, the Black Guardian himself Valentine Dyall, Sarah Sutton and of course Peter Davison. Valentine Dyall, the man in black, laughed demoniacally at the crowd and Anthony Ainley, the Master, followed suit, though not quite as demoniacally. Janet Fielding was asked what her most embarrassing moment was in the series. "Wearing that tight costume," she replied."And having to struggle with some lepers whilst wearing it." How strange that would have sounded, I thought, if it was heard out of context.

When asked about his own character in **Doctor Who**, Mark Strickson said that Turlough was in two minds as to whose side he was on, the **Master**'s or the Doctor's. It seems that we've all got to wait until the next season to discover the outcome. Valentine Kyall was challenged on his attitude to Life, the Universe and Everything, to which he replied, "I haven't got the faintest idea but I'm deep in thought about it. The Master wants to rule the Universe, I just want the chaos."

It was obvious the guests were a little more than relieved when the forum finally came to a close, they had looked far from relaxed on stage.

Outside, Ed Stewart had arrived with a mass of BBC microphones and was leaping out of bushes chatting with the visitors.

Dropping into the auction tent, I was pleased to see that Jon Pertwee was back in harness and that people were bidding as heavily as before. One particular item of interest was the *Skagras Book*, totally unreadable but the only one in existence. As the back of the tent had been rolled up to accommodate the audience, some one squeezed behind a tent flap became the lucky recipients. Suddenly it was announced that Tom Baker had arrived. "What, he's here?" Pertwee asked, looking somewhat surprised. A cheer went up and a mass exodus took place for his first destination, an autograph session in the Orangery. And sure enough seated amid the rubber plants was that infectious grin and mop of curly hair.

Later, back in the Forum tent, Tom Baker put in an appearance on the podium with John Leeson. It was obvious from their apparent rapport with each other that the two actors worked well together. The first question to Tom Baker was very 'journalistic'. "Why did you leave the series?" His answer was, of course, very diplomatic. It had been immediately noticeable to the audience the speed with which Baker made his entrance, well before John Nathan-Turner had an opportunity to introduce him.

"It wasn't so much that I left," he began. "I was pushed, I was pushed by Anthony Ainley." He smiled. "Actually I think I left because I couldn't cope with all the hadgonness. I felt that it was time to let someone else have a go, though in some ways I do miss it." Some members of the audience were curious to know why Tom Baker was not appearing in the *Special*. "Well I've been pretty busy, there was also a certain amount of timidity on my part. A feeling that per haps I should leave it as it was."

When asked about his portrayal of the Doctor and its comedy element, Baker acted somewhat surprised. "Comedy" he replied "I can't spell comedy. When I got the job as the Doctor, the BBC let me sign the contract before I even knew what I was going to do. In fact most of the time I didn't quite know what was going on. It was mostly a question of spontaneity, predictability. The hero always coming down on the moral side, so I didn't pry into the scripts as long as I won. By fair means if possible or by foul means if necessary."

Apart from questions relating to the Doctor and K-9, a lot of people were anxious to know where the famous scarf idea had come from. "We found a woman to knit it for us," Baker said. "She was so happy to be working for the BBC that she used all the wool we gave her. It gradually got longer and longer until it filled the room." He didn't deny, however, the number of times that it managed to trip him up.

When someone foolishly asked who his favourite Doctor was, apart from himself, Baker, suspecting that his audience were luring him into a trick answer, quickly replied. "I don't understand that question and I'm not the slightest bit interested." As if wishing to participate in mass suicide, another fan asked which of the Doctor's companions had been his favourite? "I think that if you had read the popular press, you'd have guessed. Next question." No-one brought up the subject again.

To round off his first meeting with the audience, Baker reminisced on some of the problems encountered when working on *Doctor Who*, "I remember one time heading for a door at top speed which this seaman failed to open, so I came in underneath it like a letter. These sea fellows found this a terrific wheeze and there was me with no skin on my lips or nose." To finish with, he thanked all the TARDIS behind him and, as if to convey more to the audience that he had at first pretended to, he said. "Two people in the TARDIS and it's crowded. Don't believe everything you see on television."

At this point he rose to his feet amidst thunderous applause and welcomed autograph hunters to the stage. Observing all this, if I were asked to sum up Tom Baker's attitude to the role of the Doctor then I would have to say that from his varied answers and witty asides he enjoyed playing the part at the time and he had turned up in the middle of Wilt shire on that particular day because, like a professional actor, he knew that his fans were anxious to meet him. He owed them that much but, on a deeply personal level, Tom Baker had put the character of the Doctor well and truly behind him.

It was by now late into the afternoon, even the dedicated few were heading for the exis. The auction was over, the Merchandising Tent resembling a waste land after a Dalek invasion. In another part of the Garden a prop TARDIS finally gave in under the strain of the weekend's guests and the roof fell off. A postcard of Carole Ann Ford lay in the dust, dropped during a stampede earlier in the day. John Nathan-Turner wished every body a safe journey home and thanked them for coming. My last glimpse of Longleat from the front gate, gave the casual passerby the impression that noth ing had happened at all. But for many this weekend had been one to remember and whatever regrets the BBC may have had, or the letters of complaint that may have since flooded in about its pitfalls, it was obvious to even the most hardened critic that there would never be a **Doctor Who Celebration** quite like it again.

ANTHONY DANIELS

Back, but way back, in *Starburst 2*, we ran an interview with the man inside See-Threepio's golden suit, Anthony Daniels. On that occasion, interviewer Tony Crawley covered Daniels career up to *Star Wars* and some of the peculiar problems encountered in acting inside a fibreglass-and-plastic suit. At the time, Daniels said of the costume, "The pain was excruciating! It was very heavy – 60 pounds of aluminium, steel, fibreglass, vacuum-formed plastic and vulcanised rubber. Plus it had a lot of sharp corners inside." Perhaps amazingly, five years after the first *Star Wars* film, journalists are still asking Tony Daniels what it is like to act inside the famous robot suit. This is the sort of question Daniels finds even more excruciating than actually wearing the costume.

Now you may think that doesn't leave a lot to talk about, especially if, like the interviewers Alan McKenzie and Steve O'Leary, you haven't seen *Return of the Jedi* yet. Just goes to show how wrong you can be.

Anthony Daniels: I've already had two interviews this morning . . .

Starburst: *Well, we'll try not to ask the same old questions.* Like *(American accent)* "Was it hot in the costume?" And you think, "Of course it was bloody hot in the costume!" Deranged people coming here and wasting my time. It's very hard, sometimes, to stay patient with interviewers. A lot of people are very unimaginative. "Was it hot in the costume?", "Did you make a lot of money?", "What was the funniest thing that happened to you?" I say, "Nothing funny has happened to me in my whole career." They say, "Oh, really? That's funny!" *(Laughter)* You look at some of these people and there's nothing going on behind the eyes . . . or between them. So I just switch on the publicity handout stuff you use when no one is talking. It's up to you to prevent me doing that.

Well, let's talk about something other than Jedi first. What do you do between the Star Wars films?

Spend the money! *(laughter)* . . . What do I do between the movies? The reason that there is three years between each movie is so I forget how awful it was to do the last one. After three years I just remember the good times. Anybody else would say, "Oh, it takes that long to write the scripts!" That's not true! It's so they can say to me, "Tony, remember what a good time you had making *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*? How about another?"

I would go crazy if Threepio were the only . . . man in my life! *(laughter)* *The New York Times* rang me up for an interview. They were on the phone for an hour from Hollywood. I was appalled. All that money. They should have sent it to me and I would have written the article! One of the things the interviewer asked me – she said, *(assumes American accent)* "Uh, Tony . . . uh, I have a question . . . uh, tell me, Tony . . . is Threepio gay?" I said, "*(clears throat)* Pardon?' She said, "Is Threepio gay . . . you know . . . homosexual?" *(laughter)*. I said, "Well . . . I edit two magazines. One is Mechanix Rubber Weekly, the other is Robots in Bondage." She said, "What was that? 'Robots in Bondage'?" They told me never to make jokes in front of Americans again.

But to answer the question, I would go crazy if Threepio were the only man in my life. I have two careers. One is Threepio and one is as a normal ordinary actor here in England doing normal, ordinary things with no great razamatazz, no huge amounts of money, neither fame nor fortune. That fills the gap.

Threepio is a spokesperson for the movies and I do get asked to do publicity events. And not just publicity events. I did a tv programme about the fifteen greatest movies ever. I introduce some of it as myself and Threepio introduces some of it as . . . himself. I get asked to conduct orchestras. I just signed a five-year contract for a certain new product, so for the next five years I'll spend a certain amount of time doing that. But all these things add up. In two weeks I'm going to Los Angeles to do a science fiction convention and I've just come back from Chicago. Then a week after I get back, I goto Japan to do the movie. Then I come back and that's where I become ordinary again. I'll put Threepio in a box for a while.

Are the acting jobs you do between the movies mostly in the theatre?

Yeah. I don't get offered much – he said bitterly – but mainly I do theatre here.

Was it . . . uh, was it hot in the costume?

Very interesting you should say that . . . now there's the other kind of interviewee, who says to every question, "Very interesting you should say that." "What he means is," Jesus Christ! How do I answer that?" Even in that short time you can think of an answer.

"It very much depends on the ambient air temperature of the locale. Therefore when it was hot, it was hot. When it was cold, it was cold. When it was neither up nor down, it was in the middle."

Actually, I was so cold in the desert, so cold in Northern California, we had to rig up lights to be on me like sun-lamps. Basically, I'm not wearing anything under the costume. It's a nude part! *(laughter)* There's only room for one layer of material, leotards and things. So, if it's cold, I've had it because tin does not keep you warm. ►

SALACIOUS CRUMB

"One of the things I really like (about Jedi) is that I'm so ordinary compared to some of the creatures. Salacious Crumb, for instance, Jabba's sidekick. He's like a chiouaous. Terribly small and mean. He and I worked very closely. He's great fun."

THE CLAUSTROPHOBIC COSTUME

I got claustrophobia in the costume for the first time (during Jedi). The scene where I'm lying on my back and Salacious Crumb – whom I personally adore – is being particularly nasty to me. You see a bit of it in the trailer. The pig guard knocks me to the ground and Salacious Crumb takes great pleasure in trying to pull me apart. I couldn't breathe very well because the chest plate is crunched in. The camera is there. My dresser is there. There's a few people around. I couldn't be safer. Yet . . . this panic started. They sat me up, took the mask off and I just talked to myself for a bit. It's a horrible feeling. It really is like you're going to die! It's the only time it's ever happened. Threepio is like a cockroach. Once I'm on my back, there's no way I can get up again."

I remember you said in the interview in **Starburst** *2 that one of the problems was that it had sharp edges inside that dug into your shin. Did they get the costume right, yet?*

Oh yes. They completely re-made it for the second movie. But how do you make a robot? How many people have sat down and tried? It's very difficult. All my criticisms are based on the fact that *that's* the problem with doing the part. Nobody can do anything about that. The first costume, everybody realised, was appalling. The second one really does work very well – except the right hand crippled me. It was like a vice. I said, "Mark Hamill got a new hand in *Empire*. I went a new hand for *Jedi*." So they made a new hand. Now it works as good as it ever will. Also you can put it on just like that (*snaps fingers*). Well, not just like that. It takes about quarter of an hour. It comes off in 2 minutes. Now I wear it for each take then clean it off. One thing that really bugs me is the peripheral vision. Through the mask you can only see dead ahead. I spend a lot of time rehearsing movements. And I have to guess a lot. There's a good example of this in *Star Wars*. The scene where I'm in the oil bath. As you look at the screen, Mark Hamill's on the left. Ha's talking to me. I'm in the oil bath looking at him and he says, "Was it hot in the costume?" (*laughter*) and what I can't see is that he's walked across to the right of the screen and I'm looking very interestedly towards the left at nothing at all. I just noticed that the other day looking at the tape.

Is that a Mervyn Peake original painting on the wall? (He looks surprised) Yeah. So is that one. How do you know about Mervyn Peake?

Mervyn Peake is one of my favourite writers and artists. Hey! Really? See what drives me mad is that Maeve (*Gilmour, Peake's widow*) won't sell the illustrations from the Gormenghast books. Those of Swelter and Steerpike, for instance. I love his work, it's stunning. God, you're the only person who's ever noticed those paintings.

Have you read all his books?

Oh yes, and all the stranger stuff he did.

And Maeve Gilmour's biography of him?

Yes. Very depressing. Bit heavy.

Yeah, but fascinating.

Every one thinks that Tolkien is e big deal when it comes to fantasy.

Oh no, Tolkien is an also-ran compared to Peake.

He really is. But in America, Tolkien is next to MacDonald's in popularity.

(Editor's note: For any readers confused by this last exchange, we seriously recommend that you seek out Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, Titus Groan, Gormenghast and Titus Alone. *You won't be sorry!)*

So how come you haven't talked George Lucas into making a Gormenghast movie?

Because he's tired. It really takes a lot out of him. He's not going to do any more for a couple of years. I have an idea some one already had the film rights. It's as simple as that. They've been buggering around for years. I believe John Hurt was, at one point, going to play Steerpike. I think they're going to do it on the radio. I happen to be very keen on radio . . *Well, you did Star Wars for the radio.*

Oh yes. The reason both Mark and I do those is it's like giving something away. *Star Wars* takes a lot of money from people. You pay to see the film, you pay for the toys. With radio, it's free. It's like giving a bit back. It's quite tiring because there's a hell of a lot of dialogue. In the movie, there's twenty minutes of dialogue in all, the rest is sound effects and music. With the radio there's four hours of dialogue. That's a lot of talking. I get very tired because making Threepio's voice is not easy. It's from up here (*taps base of throat*) and also robots don't breathe, so you can't hear (*heavy breathing sound*) all that. I have to edit pauses so I can breathe. But the radio show is terribly popular in the States. After *Jedi* I was back from location for a week, then I went to New York to do two weeks of the radio show. So I had a whole lot of *Star Wars* at once.

We haven't seen Jedi yet. How do you think it's turned out? Oh, the movies are always as much of a surprise to me asto everyone else. Because knowing the script isn't knowing the film. That's what makes me laugh about people leaking that Boba Fett does this or Jabba the Hutt is a slug. I mean, so what? Until you see it, until you experience Jabba. . .

What fascinates me is that some magazines think the public genuinely wants to know the story of a film before it comes out. I think the readers have got to say, "What are these guys doing?" Were I not in the films, I wouldn't want to know what it is because I'm going to pay £3 to see it. Now if I've already had £1.50's worth from *Cinefantastique* . . . It's like going to the kid next door and saying "Hey, I know what you're getting for Christmas," in November. You'd be wrecking the fans' enjoyment. I resent that.

The first I heard about this (*Cinefantastique*) article was when a radio interviewer in Los Angeles got hold of it and said, "I'm going to read out this article. If you don't want to hear it, switch on again in four minutes." They had a lot of reaction from people who had heard it and said, how dare they try and spoil everything, and also from people who had switched off and said, "Thank you. We don't think you should even have read it out, whatever it was, but thank you for warning us."

How does George Lucas' approach to film-making differ from the more usual Hollywood approach?

Very peculiar. I've been working with him for six years, now. Just before Christmas they rang me up. They had completely forgotten that Luke Skywalker had lost his light-sabre in *Empire*, and there he is in *Jedi*, whipping off bottletops with it. Where did he get it from? Mark Hamill and I had to go and do something about this. So he did his bit in the studio and I did a location shot in Death Valley. There were about 20 people there. I was the only actor. That's the way George likes to make movies. He likes to have one camera, no more than 20 people. And he was like a child at Christmas. He is not allowed to do that when he's got 800 people in the studio.

But I think it's great when they make mistakes like "How did Luke get a light-sabre?"

You didn't have a lot to do in Empire . . .

Yes. One of the problems with Threepio in *Empire* was, because the suit was so appalling in *Star Wars*, everything you did was a nightmare. And George remembered this writing the script of *Empire* and therefore didn't put Threepio in. Too difficult, problematic. Then, once Irvin Kershner saw what I could do in the new suit, he said to me, "I had no idea what you could do," and got all enthusiastic (*slips into excellent Kershner impression*), "Tony, Tony. Be in the scene, be in the scene. We needya, we needye." And he put me in every scene for no reason. So I'd be like talking wellpaper. (*Kershner's voice*) "Say something funny." He loved everything I did, and I loved him because his enthusiasm was terrific. But the trouble was that you can't have a character there like an oil painting, as decoration. So I plucked up courage to talk to George end we walked around the studio for about three hours end had a long talk. I felt disappointed that they split R2 end I up. I worked very hard to create that relationship in the first film end to heve one of my mein things taken away is a bit irriteting. And George kind of nodded and said that R2 had to leave me because he had to go with Luke for the story. But in *Jedi*, Threepio really getsto do something. The languages he speeks (*goes into an incomprehensible language which defies edscription*).

Yes, you forgot that See-Threepio . . .

. . . Is a translator, of course! He's been claiming for yeers he can do six million forms of communication, some of them, of course, in sign language. For instance, that! (*laughter*). Couldn't do thet on the. But in *Jedi* . . . you'll see.

The languages are great fun, because Ben Burtt, who does all of the sound effects including all of R2's dialogue, came up with all these notes and tapes and togethar we created the languages. I think audiences are going to love that side of it.

Ben and I would go to George (*Lucas*) and show him something like, "Lavo, lavo." and he just wouldn't hava that. He hated it. And I wanted to say, "Gooboo Vader!" because if ever anyona needed Goobooing . . . (*laughter*) But they had

TOTAL SECURITY

"There are some people who don't get a script at all. Some people don't need one. Some people couldn't read it if they got one! I get one! I get one that has most of the story but there are some pink pages that are terribly secret. So the two actors in that scene have the pages. So do the director and the continuity person and you close the set for that scene. So there were these pink pages I hadn't heard about. On location, one day, I went to sleep behind a log. The sun was shining so I thought I'd passout for quarter of an hour. And when I came to, on the other side of the log they were shooting scene 39b in total secrecy (laughter) *with me stuck behind this log, hearing every word! It's the scene in the forest between Han Solo and Princess Leia. And what you're not to know is that just out of sight is Anthony Daniels, half unconscious, half terrified he was going to be shot. Actually, they didn't mind, because they know I wouldn't say anything. But it did make me laugh . . . all this security blown by an actor taking a quick nap."*

THE REALITY OF FANTASY

"Working with Jabba (the Hutt) is a most wonderful experience. You've got this monstrous thing, this giant slug, and you've got complete eye-contact with it. He moves, his eyes focus, the irises contact. It's totally real. It's like being in a giant playground with these great toys that have been left for us to play with. They cost thousands and thousands of pounds, so not everyone can have them."

MORE SECURITY

"You've got to make sure no one is going to give the secrets away. There are times when one has wondered where these leaks are coming from. The fewer people know the secrets the better. With some of the characters, they don't have to know the words at all. So, in that case, you get them to say, as with Darth Vader, "One, two, three . . . " or "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday . . . " which is better because they're real words. It's very difficult for Mark Hamill when he's faced with Darth Vader saying, instead of "I am your father, " "Monday, Tuesday . . . " It's difficult for him to get that look of horror, it takes some acting. I don't think people realise that."

changed the scene from its original intention after it was shot. I wanted to end of a rallying cry of "Gooboo Vader!" but I couldn't so I had to sneak it in in the middle, like "In-manaman cha gooboo Vader." That means "Stuff Darth Vader," roughly translated.

Are you going to do any more Star Wars films. Are there going to be any more Star Wars films to do?

I don't know, if you want the truth. It's up to George. The fact is they're a lot of work and they are a big risk. The money has to be borrowed from somewhere. I think he's going to look at the reaction to *Jedi*.

I'm happy with the movie. The ending is good. A solid ending.

Something Empire didn't have!

Oh, I hated that. I know I didn't pay for the ticket (*laughter*) but I said, "Wait a minute," as it ended in outer space . . . we all had to do that shot again. That very final shot (*in Empire*). I said they couldn't shoot it like that. They said, "Oh yes we can!" I said, "No, we've all got to be standing on the set." I'm such a know-all! About a month later I got a phone call (*laughter*) The film had wrapped by then. Fortunately they had saved that one set.

So Jedi ends . . . ?

Jedi has an ending. Everyone gets blown apart and Threepio takes over the galaxy!

When I say to people I've got pieces off the Millennium Falcon here as souvenirs, they say, "Why?" I say I got it off the junk heap at the back of Elstree Studios. They say, "Waddya mean . . . it's junked?" Well, sure it's junked. It doesn't exist any more. If we make any more *Star Wars* films, whatever happens to the Falcon in *Jedi*, it'll never be used again. So saying you won't see Mark Hamill again doesn't mean to say he's wiped out in *Jedi* . . . as, of course, he's (*laughter*)!

Threepio and R2 are the only characters to continue through all the chapters of the Star Wars series, right?

Well, George likes robots. And the story is seen through the eyes of the two robots. They're your tour guides. And, of course, they don't change with time.

During the filming of *Jedi*, I said, "How come you always shoot my scenes at the end of the day?" They said, "Well, you know, the human actors (*laughter*) look very tired at the end of the day. You don't." (*laughter*). I said, "How do you think I feel. I'm exhausted!" "Yeah, but you don't look it!"

There has to be some advantages to acting inside a costume like that.

Like what?

If there's another six movies, you could go on doing the role forever.

But how long do I have to do it before my grandchildren say, "Grandad, aren't you a bit old for all this?"

That's the point. It's completely up to you. Also, as an actor, your face won't become overexposed. You could walk along Oxford Street and not be recognised.

No, no, because I carry these big placards (*laughter*). No, I get a lot of recognition in the States now. An example. I checked into a hotel in Chicago. The man from 20th Century-Fox was there, arranging everything. I went to deposit my valuables . . . airline ticket, passport, tiara (*laughter*) . . . in the safe deposit box. The clerk looked up. I said, "Could I have a safe deposit?" in an English accent. And he kind of smiled. Got the form out. Filled it in, kind of looking at me. And he got to the name and said "It is Dudley Moore, isn't it?" (*laughter*). *But you don't look like Dudley Moore!*

I'm taller (*laughter*) . . . What's the nature of this interview?

BORED OF THE RINGS

"I did Lord of the Rings, *you know. An awful animated film by . . .* Ralph Bakshi

. . . I was Legolas. "Tony (in American accent) *you're Legolas! I know you wanna play Frodo. You're Legolas!" We all hated him. And, of course, he didn't do the second part of the film. (Stentorian announcer's voice) "So ends Part One of . . . Lord of the Rings." And that annoyed a lot of people. He was such a disgusting man. We never did any more of that, thank god . . ."*

Well, it was set up by 20th Century-Fox . . . I guess to help promote the movie.

I don't think the film needs promoting.

Nor do I!

It's just nice for the fans to read some of the background.

Exactly, it's a conversation by proxy, a bit of personal contact.

Yes, that's what a lot of people forget. It's like when I act, I am acting for the audience. On their behalf . . . they experience the adventure . . .

. . . vicariously?

I've never had reporters come here and talk about Mervyn Peake and use words like "vicariously" before! What are you doing working for *Starburst*? (*laughter*).

Does George Lucas keep the out-takes?

No! I have said, "Where are the blooper reels?" That's one place where they really lack a sense of humour. In my opinion, blooper reels are great fun. It takes the edge off any pomposity you might be accused of. And I think just to have

WITHOUT THE FANS . . .

"I feel very strongly about looking after the fans. I mean, one is very responsible for them. If you're going to do something like Star Wars, *you're responsible for making it really good and entertaining for them. I think you're also responsible for meeting them, signing autographs, answering fan mail, for making the next film as good as possible. George (Lucas) feels like that. I feel like that. Magazines and newspapers who get hold of information and blurt it out before time aren't doing fans any good at all."*

film of Yoda's eye falling out (*laughter*) or Mark Hamill farting (*laughter*) would be so funny.

Have you noticed the doors in *Star Wars* that whiz up and down so fluently? The first time they were used . . . "I think I'll open this door!" (*hits an imaginary button and makes a noise like a car with a flat battery*). George said, "Cut! Can't thiago any faster?" (*laughter*).

In Star Wars *the characters have to stand still in front of the doors while they're opening or closing and can only move when the door has stopped moving.*

Right! They'd print every other frame. In fact, Alec Guinness' eyes do something funny in one scene. They suddenly open very wide! And I love that juxtaposition of fantasy and reality. One day, I was sitting in the Millennium Falcon cockpit, which on the inside is stunning. On the other side there's all these wooden batons holding it up. And there was this plastic cup with a piece of bacon rind in it from somebody's breakfast. And that is Life, mate!

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TIME TRAVEL MOVIES

BY JOHN BROSNAN

It's the classic example of a time travel paradox — you know how it goes I'm sure: What would happen to a time traveller if he went back in time and killed his grandfather before he'd met his grandmother? Would the time traveller then cease to exist? But if he never existed who killed the grandfather? And so on.

The intellectual challenge presented by such problems has always attracted science fiction writers and produced, over the years, a large number of fine and ingenious time travel stories, like Robert Heinlein's famous *All you Zombies*. A reworking of one of his earlier stories called *By His Bootstraps* it's about this time traveller who, after a sex change operation, goes back in time, has sex with his former self and gives birth to . . . himself, thus leaving the reader pondering the question of who came first.

Not surprisingly film makers have tended to avoid such mind-boggling conundrums when they've come to make time travel movies, preferring to use time travel as a straight-forward transportation device to get their characters into an exotic locale. Very rarely have they tried to take full advantage of the full potential offered by time travel themes, but then it's rare for film makers to satisfactorily handle *any* science fiction theme.

But I was quite surprised, when I started digging around in my files, at just how many time travel films have been made. One of the earliest wasn't exactly a time "travel" story but dealt instead with the manipulation of time. It was a French comedy made in 1913 called *Onesime Horloger* and featured the then famous clown Ernest Bourbon (known as "Onesime") as a lovesick suitor who tampers with time in order to speed up the arrival of his wedding day, with the result his son outgrows him almost before the honeymoon is over.

This is said to have been the inspiration for another, later French film — Rene Clair's *Paris Qui Dort (Paris Asleep)* made in 1923. This was about a scientist who accidentally freezes all of Paris into a split-second of time with an experimental ray, with the exception of a small group of people who remain unaffected and decide to treat the frozen city, with its equally frozen inhabitants, as a vast playground. I have never seen this but John Baxter says, "Even today it's a film of wit and charm . . ."

I suspect both films were originally inspired by the H.G. Wells short story *The New Accelerator* about two scientists who inject themselves with a drug that speeds up their metabolisms so much that the world around them appears to slow ►

down – people, animals and objects all seem to be frozen in time. Best reworking of this fascinating idea was John D. MacDonald's very amusing novel *The Girl, the Gold Watch and Everything*. It was turned into a TV movie a couple of years ago but has yet to appear on British television.

Another early sf movie dealing with time was a 1922 one-reeler called *The Sky Splitter* made by an American called John R. Bray. Also a comedy it concerned a scientist who exceeeds the speed of light in his experimental spaceship and finds himself reliving his life. I haven't seen this either so I can't tell you if John Bray is the forgotten George Lucas of his era.

At the end of the last century, and at the beginning of this one, there was a vogue in stories about people falling asleep under odd circumstances and waking up in the far future, as in Wells' novel *The Sleeper Wakes* (1910) and the French writer Louis Boussenard's *10,000 Years in a Block of Ice* (I kid you not), and this was reflected in the cinema in such movies as George Melies' *One Hundred Years After* made in 1911. This two-reeler had a young scientist put himself in a safe deposit vault, in a state of suspended animation, for 100 years. He emerges from the vault in 2011 to discover that women have taken over. They are not only wearing the pants but men are wearing dresses. When taken before the town's female ruler the man from 1911 so impresses her with his love-making that she gives the vote back to men. Melies probably thought he was making a totally absurd comedy. Little did he realize . . .

Other movies in this genre include *In the Year 2000* (1912), *In the Year 2014* (1914) and *Percy Pimpernickle, Soubrette* (1914 . . . and no, I haven't seen the latter either but *soubrette* means "serving maid" if that's any help). Most lavish of these whimsical looks ahead was *Just Imagine*, the embarassingly awful musical made in 1930 which had comedian El Brendel waking up in 1980 after being struck by lightning, and most recent, and funniest, was Woody Allen's *Sleeper* (1973).

And let's not forget the most famous of the many characters who have slept their way into the future – Buck Rogers. He first appeared in a serial in *Amazing Stories* in 1928, became a comic strip character in 1929 and then in 1939 reached the movie screens in the Universal serial starring Buster Crabbe. In 1979 he had a new lease of life in a TV movie, and subsequent series, but this Buck Rogers had little to do with the original.

But unless you count the various versions of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (made in 1921, 1931 and 1948) and I don't, then genuine time travel movies were thin on the screen until the 1950s. And even during the big sf film boom of the 1950s the theme didn't interest very many film makers until the end of the decade . . .

One exception was Edward Bernds, former sound effects man for The Three Stooges, who wrote and directed *World Without End* in 1956. This had 4 astronauts caught in a time warp and dropped into the 26th century where, inevitably, an atomic war has ravaged the earth and one-eyed hairy mutants roam about committing anti-social acts (sounds like my neighbourhood in 1983). The remaining "real" humans live underground but are helped by the astronauts to regain the surface. It's a very trite and predictable film made on a budget barely big enough to cover the mutants with sufficient hair. I preferred Bernds' later sf films – *The Return of the Fly* and *The Three Stooges in Orbit*.

Time travel played a small part in *The Invisible Boy* in 1957 and a bigger part in *Terror from the Year 5000* (1958). This was an AIP cheapie made by Robert Gurney about a scientist who can pluck people and objects out of the distant future with his "time vault". Naturally the future world has been ravaged by an atomic war and the things he finds in his vault tend to be both radioactive and rather odd-looking (eg, a cat with 4 eyes, etc). The device also extracts an evil and disfigured woman from the year 5000 who is anxious to breed with uncontaminated men . . .

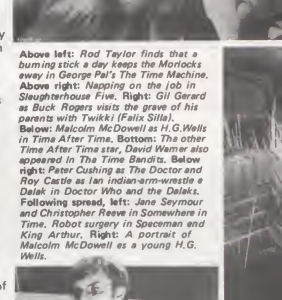
Apparantly this isn't as bad as it sounds (nope, I haven't seen this either) and I'm told it has a small (very small) cult following due to the presence of Salome Jens (she plays the evil lady) but don't ask me why as I'd never heard of her.

In 1960 came George Pal's version of H.G. Wells' seminal book *The Time Machine*. Shorn of the original's political and sociological content the film is a typically lightweight Pal production, though far superior to most of his other films such as the truly awful *Conquest of Space* and *Atlantis the Lost Continent*.

It has moments of genuine, 24 carat Sense-of-Wonder, as in the actual time travelling sequences and the scenes dealing with the time traveller's arrival and exploration of the future world but on the whole it fails to do justice to the Wells story. Everything is over-simplified to the point of absurdity – the twin societies or Morlocks and Eloi are reduced to two small groups in the film and the hero is able to rouse the Eloi from their centuries-long apathy with ridiculous ease.

Another flaw was the miscasting of Australian macho-man Rod Taylor as the Victorian time traveller (he seemed as Victorian as Sylvester Stallone) but at least the film *looked* good, especially the time machine itself . . .

A much inferior time travel movie made the same year was *Beyond the Time Barrier* which had a similar plot to *World Without End* and an even smaller budget. A test pilot goes zooming through the usual time warp and lands in 2024. He finds the usual desolation – this time the result of a nuclear war in 1971 (I must have been away on holiday at the time) – and the usual mutants roaming about a above ground while the usual humans huddle underground, etc, etc, (the exact



Above left: *Rod Taylor finds that a burning stick a day keeps the Morlocks away in George Pal's The Time Machine.* **Above right:** *Napping on the job in Sleughterhouse Five.* **Right:** *Gil Gerard as Buck Rogers visits the grave of his parents with Twikki (Felix Silla).* **Below:** *Malcolm McDowell as H.G.Wells in Time After Time.* **Bottom:** *The other Time After Time star, David Warner also appeared in The Time Bandits.* **Below right:** *Peter Cushing as The Doctor and Roy Castle as Ian indian-arm-wrestle a Dalek in Doctor Who and the Daleks.* **Following spread, left:** *Jane Seymour and Christopher Reeve in Somewhere in Time. Robot surgery in Speceman and King Arthur.* **Right:** *A portrait of Malcolm McDowell as a young H.G. Wells.*

reverse of the situation in *The Time Machine*, I've just realized). It was directed by the cult film maker Edgar G. Ulmer and written by Arthur G. Pierce (I have a soft spot for Pierce – he wrote one of the looniest sf movies I've ever seen, *Space Invasion from Lapland* – a true turkey classic).

A much more serious treatment of time travel was attempted by French experimental film maker Chris Marker in 1962 in his short movie *La Jetee (The Pier)*. It is set after World War 3 (of course) when a group of French scientists, living underground (of course), send a man back through time by use of drugs. A particularly vivid childhood memory acts as a catalyst for the time traveller – it concerns a day when, as a small boy, he had been watching a particularly beautiful girl at Orly Airport and then seen a man, running nearby, killed.

The time traveller successfully reaches the past but falls in love with the girl he remembers from the airport and decides to remain in that era. When he attempts to run away with her he is shot dead by another traveller from the future and we realize that, as a child, he had seen *himself* being killed that day . . .

What's most interesting about this evocative short film (it's only 29 minutes) is that it's composed almost entirely of stills (the exception is a brief moment when a close-up of the girl's face suddenly comes to life).

But it's back to the old familiar formula with *The Time Travellers* made in 1964. Once again a group from the present end up in the future, via a time "portal", to discover a world ravaged by the effects of an atomic war and the human survivors besieged by marauding mutants. It did have an interesting twist though – one of the four protagonists ends up by getting trapped in a perpetual time loop, which means he will have to keep reliving the events of the movie for all eternity, poor sod.

To be honest, it's a much better film than *World Without End* and *Beyond the Time Barrier* (it has a slightly bigger budget too) with a fair script by Danishborn writer/director Ib Melchior, who was involved with several sf movies during his career. The best of these was *Robinson Crusoe on Mars*, for which he wrote the screenplay, and the worst was *Reptilicus*, an incredibly silly dinosaur picture set in Copenhagen (*Reptilicus* would make a good double with *Space Invasion from Lapland* – Scandinavia's two worst contributions to the genre, if not the *only* ones . . .)

Speaking of *Space Invasion from Lapland* its author Arthur C. Pierce actually wrote a relatively impressive screenplay for a film called *Cyborg 2087*. Unusually for a time travel movie it's concerned with one of those time paradoxes I was discussing at the start of this article. Michael Rennie plays Garth, a cyborg (part-human, part-machine; the old term for "bionic") from the future who returns to 1966 (the year the film was made) to prevent a scientist from building a device that will later be used as a mind-control weapon by a totalitarian government in the year 2087.

With the assistance of the scientist's attractive assistant he persuades the scientist to abandon his invention even though Garth knows that if the device is destroyed its disappearance will eliminate the possibility of his own existence. And that's what happens. Garth vanishes and all memory of his visit is eradicated from the minds of the people who encountered him, even the girl who'd fallen in love with him.

It's hardly a masterpiece, and it has the look of a cheap made-for-TV movie, but at least it's logically self-consistent and it has a few clever moments. Like the sequence where two government cyborgs from the future appear and begin tracking Garth through the town, never deviating an inch from the invisible trail they're following, even if it means pushing cars to one side or running straight through a houseful of party guests.

I can't think of a single good word for William Castle's *Project X* made in 1968. Based on a *couple* of novels by British author Leslie P. Davies (one would have been more than enough) it's a confusing mess about a secret agent in the year 2118 who has the identity of a bank robber from 1968 implanted in his mind. Nor is the film helped by underwater sequences consisting of cartoon animation by the Hanna-Barbera studio . . . *Project X* is both a genuine oddity and a genuine turkey. Avoid at all cost.

Well, I've been trying to postpone the inevitable but I suppose I *have* to mention Doctor Who, or rather the two film versions based on the TV series which looks as if it's going to last until the end of time. Produced by Milton Subotsky and Max Rosenberg they starred Peter Cushing as the Doctor and can best be described as . . . disappointing. The first was *Doctor Who and the Daleks* (1965) and not only did the Doctor have to contend with the malign, mobile pepper pots but also the wince-inducing Roy Castle who played his assistant. *Daleks -- Invasion Earth* (1966) was a little better (mainly because Bernard Cribbins had replaced Castle) but not much.

Now back to the *real* movies...

Not that I like this next one very much – *Je T'aime, Je T'aime*, made in 1969 by Alain Resnais. When a failed suicide is discharged from hospital he is abducted by a group of scientists who place him in a very organic-looking time machine that resembles a giant pumpkin. They intend to transport him back one year in time but the machine malfunctions, not surprisingly (only a fool would get in a time machine that looks like a giant pumpkin) and he begins to oscillate back and forth in time. The remainder of the movie consists of fragments of his previous life that slowly build up to create an atmosphere of humdrum monotony as well as a suspicion that he may have murdered his dreary girlfriend. The film ends with another suicide attempt by the protagonist, the implication being that this

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one will be successful. Pretentious in the extreme and for Resnais fens only, who like this sort of thing.

Slaughterhouse Five is also about a men who sterts bouncing back and forth in time but it's much more enjoyeble despite being seriously flewed. Based on the novel by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. it concerns the predicement of middle-aged Americen businessman Billy Pilgrim who begins to experience time shifts back to the period when he was e POW in the Germen city of Dresden. He is agein forced to live through the massive fire-bombing of the city by the Allies which killed over 100,000 people in e single night. He also experiences forwerd shifts in time, when he has become the prisoner of en elien race who keep him in a zoo with e half-neked Hollywood starlet (Valerie Perrine) . . .

But while the juxtaposing of the horrors of Dresden with the whimsical fantasies of the elien zoo wes e successful literery device it just doesn't work in the movie. The Dresden sequences are very impressive but the ones involving the starlet in the zoo ere rather emberressing. When watching the film it's easy to see where the strengths of its director, George Roy Hill, lie — he cen handle the grim reelity of the Germen sections but when it comes to fentesy he fells apert. Even so, *Slaughterhouse Five* is a better then everege movie . . .

The Man Who Fell to Earth (1976) is e time trevel movie of an unusuel sort. Not only do the events of the story seem jumbled up in time but the characters seem to be living at different rates to each other, some appeering to ege more quickly than others (of course this could be the result of en inefficient continuity girl . . .). But it does heve one moment of streight-forwerd time trevel — in the charming sequence where David Bowie's limousine suddenly slips back in time and meterialises in a field neer some home-steeders in the lest century . . .

My fevourite time trevel movie has to be *Time After Time* (1979), written and directed by Nicholes Meyer (he later directed *Wrath of Khan*, true, but I heve decided to forgive him for this). One of the most eppealing things ebout it is it's sheer *audacity*. I mean, there heven't been meny films that heve feetured e cer chase in present day San Frencisco involving Jack the Ripper and H.G. Wells . . .

But apert from the cleverness of the basic idee the film elso succeeds on en emotionel level. Thenks to the ecting talents of Malcolm McDowell as the young Wells end Mery Steenburgen as the liberated girl he becomes involved with, the cherecters become reel people (David Warner hes less success with Jack the Ripper but that's more the feult of the script). The relationship thet develops between them is both believable and touching, thus providing the film with e strong element of credibility which helps to offset its more fer-fetched plot contrivances.

Meyer even menaged to introduce and *solve*, e couple of time trevel paradoxes. One occurs when Wells takes the girl forward one dey in his time mechine end she reads in e newspeper thet she is to be the Ripper's next victim; Meyer gets round this setisfactorily end also the problem of how Wells can take her back to his own time without altering history...

All in all *Time After Time* is e very superior fantesy movie and I couldn't understend why it wesn't a box office success, either here or in Americe. But then neither was *Somewhere in Time*, enother film about a romence between two people from different eras . . .

As I seid in my review of the movie in Sterburst 31 I think it comes a poor second to *Time After Time*, being much too sentimental end mewkish (but then so wes Richard Metheson's original novel

Bid Time Return). Admittedly, however, director Jeennot Szwerc does a good job et creeting a consistent mood of dreemy "other-worldliness" in the sequences set in the past end by the end of the film you elmost believe thet to be in Michigen in 1912 wes to be in the best of all possible worlds, the leck of penicillin and other modern necessities not withstanding . . .

As the time-crossed lovers Christopher Reeve end Jane Seymour give good performances (even though Reeve was miscast) but couldn't cepture the intensity of feeling displayed by McDowell and Steenburgen in *Time After Time* (but as the letter two were subsequently married I suppose thet's not surprising).

There's yet another cross-time romance in *The Final Countdown* (1980), this one between a girl from 1941 (Katherine Ross) end e scientist from 1980 (Mertin Sheen), but it's only a minor sub-plot in the film which is mainly ebout whet heppens when a nucleer eircreft cerrier gets sent through a time warp to 1941 and right in the path of the Jepanese atteckers on their way to Peerl Herbour. Unfortunetely, despite this intriguing premise, nothing *does* happen — the film-mekers avoid the problems of creating a paradox by simply having the ship whisked back to 1980, thanks to e convenient reeppearance of the time werp, before the confrontetion between the two forces cen teke plece. *Final Countdown* is nothing but a long build-up to a giant cop-out. Maybe they should have stuck to the original story which had a World War 11 submerine being sent back to World War 1...

The same idea, though on a much smaller scele, is the basis of the forthcoming movie *Time Rider* which is about e motor bike chempion finding himself end his machine trensported back to the Wild West. Sounds e lot more fun then the ebove movie (elso sounds es if it was inspired by that time travelling limousine sequence in *The Man Who Fell to Earth*) but es I heven't seen it yet I cen't comment.

Finally, e look at two time-trevelling comedies: one of them is *The Spaceman and King Arthur* (1979), the fourth version of Merk Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur* to be filmed. A Disney production, it's a mildly amusing, smell-scele movie ebout e young Americen estroneut who goes through e time werp (spece must be *full* of these damn things) in his shuttle and lends in King Arthur's England.

Much, *much* better was Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits* (1981) which must rate as one of the most inventive time trevel films ever made end far superior in terms of ideas end etmosphere then the mejority of "serious" efforts in the genre. Its episodic story about a group of dwerfs who have stolen God's mep of ell the time werps in order to plunder the treesures of past end future has e few *longueurs* along the way but on the whole it's a witty end impressive piece of work.

It mede me wish that other film-mekers would be equally es dering as Gilliem end ettempt to meke similerly inventive movies on more serious time travel themes. There's certeinly e lerge body of published sf novels on the subject just weiting to be picked up, such es Asimov's *The End of Eternity*, Wilson Tucker's *The Year of the Quiet Sun*, Rober Silverburg's *Up the Line* end Gregory Benford's *Timescape* to name a few of the best...

It's about time (sorry) that the time travel equivelent to *2001* or *Star Wars* was made. Film-mekers have really only just begun to scratch the surface of the space-time continuum — let's hope they become more adventurous in future (sorry).

The time is ripe■

the Hunger

Bowie is Back! A best-selling album and two new movies. Alan Jones reviews the first of his films to be released and finds it lacks bite.

The film version of Whitley Strieber's best-selling novel isn't so much a motion picture as an art attack. It was exactly what I was expecting, so I can't say I was in the least bit disappointed. Strieber's scary story has been distilled to a slim scenario and smothered in an unremitting, cool and calculated style. I'm sure David Bowie fans will adore it – even though his role is more of a supporting one and over within half an hour. But for any horror enthusiast, it's a glittering vacuum that pays scant attention to anything but the glossy artifice it achieves so brilliantly.

The Hunger is a horror film in desperate disguise as its mood, look and ambience are deemed far more important than the source material. However, director Tony Scott's success is an empty one because the mood owes more to the post rock-video era than anything else, the look is animated *Vogue* fashion spread, pure and simple, and the ambience is about as textured as a shampoo commercial. I found *The Hunger* eminently watchable but Tony Scott's aesthetics misplaced, to the detriment of the underlying themes. All this stylistic flash is supposed to have a point, of course. It highlights how the exterior illusion of perfection and beauty all too often hides decadence and corruption.

Catherine Deneuve, in the best "ice-maiden" tradition, plays Miriam, one of a diminishing race of beings dating from an ancient Egyptian civilisation who possess the secret of eternal life – vampirism, for the want of a better term. She can bestow this gift on a loved one only for a few centuries until it takes its toll in rapid ageing and decay. As *The Hunger* opens this is precisely what is happening to her constant companion since the 18th century, David Bowie as John Baylock. His decline sends Miriam on a search for a cure, or a replacement, and when she finds Susan Sarandon, as Sarah Roberts, a doctor researching the ageing process, both problems look set to be resolved. But unknown to Miriam, her cult supremacy is about to be threatened by a power surprisingly greater than her own.

Devoted readers of the novel will see that not only is the ending a complete departure from that in the book but also that the film lacks the horrific "punch"

of the novel. Also lost in the transition from the printed page to celluloid is the concept that Miriam's lust for life can only be satisfied by human flesh. And unlike the more traditional screen vampires Miriam can be stopped by a subliminal slash on the neck with the Egyptian symbol of life – the ankh. The tasteful gore on show here is one of Tony Scott's more remarkable achievements as it is a perplexing mixture of the restrained and the explicit.

Bowie's incredible ageing make-up job aside, created by Dick Smith who perfects all the ideas he first used for Dustin Hoffman in *Little Big Man*, I liked the climax where Miriam's previous lovers emerge from their tombs in the attic to rot and crumble all over her and push her over the brink to a fate equal to their own. Carl Fullerton helped Smith in this momentous task and an added delight is provided with the inclusion of some stop-motion footage, by Dave Allen, of a monkey rapidly ageing which has had its impact lessened somewhat by being viewed on a video console.

Scott's idea of making an ultra-hip movie, which is the sole premise of this project I'm afraid, means that he borrows a lot of imagery from the vast repertoire of his brother, Ridley. Every frame of *The Hunger* comes complete with constantly billowing net curtains, angular shadows from venetian blinds and smoky shafts of sunlight streaking through darkened rooms. The schizoid editing, which is supposed to supply the story information but only confuses, becomes irritating after a while. These facets all help to sabotage the central storyline that is struggling to shine through. The only moment of involvement I felt in the entire film came when Deneuve tries to give a last parting kiss to the deteriorating Bowie before she locks him away in a nightmarish living hell. Otherwise the strident cool, so mechanically ever-present, is enough to freeze you into abject acceptance. *The Hunger* needed a sleaziness and a much less guardedly sterile vision to be successful. Or perhaps it's just that Strieber's tales are basically unfilmable. The movie version of his novel *The Wolfen* wasn't really much better than this.

The Hunger, for all its chic trappings and *Harpers and Queen* approach, isn't a patch on the superior and similarly themed 1971 film *Daughters of Darkness*. This Harry Kumel film expertly meshed perverted decadence with stylish horror in a way that never betrayed its roots. This seems beyond Tony Scott's capabilities because *The Hunger*, with all its coldness, is doing nothing original at all despite the inclusion of the two stars indulging in some soft-core lesbianism.

Scott has fallen into the trap that so many directors do when they announce apologetically that their next film is a horror project. Or perhaps it could be down to the fact that Scott's idea of a classy redefinition of the horror film just isn't mine.

HALLOWEEN III

Review by Alan Jones

The Shape is dead. Long live the shape of future *Halloween* episodes. Don't get me wrong, *Halloween III* is certainly no masterpiece. It has its fair share of flaws — but after the dismal failure of *Halloween II*, the merest hint of any originality at all is a relief. Thanks to *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*, John Carpenter's brainchild regains its self-respect.

This time around the only glimpse we get of the psychotic Michael Myers is on a television trailer advertising the original film as the highlight of the forthcoming Halloween celebrations in Northern California. The screening is being sponsored by Silver Shamrock, a firm who are manufacturing three specific types of Halloween mask, under the auspices of the sinisiter Conal Cochran (Dan O'Herlihy). The relentless and obnoxious jingle that accompanies his advertisement has brought heavy volume business from toy shop owners, literally under siege by the children of America who are snapping them up fast. And this is exactly what Cochran wants as he is about to pull the most horrendous practical joke on the unsuspecting viewers of his planned coast-to-coast big prize give-away on October 31st. Upset that Halloween has been commercialised to the point where its cultural roots as an ancient Celtic festival have been forgotten, Cochran plans to teach the "Trick or Treaters" a lesson they will never forget. Planted in the trademark of each mask is a micro-circuit containing a chip from a rock smuggled in from Stonehenge, which when triggered by the special pumpkin symbol will have suitably terrifying results. Doctor Daniel Challis (Tom Atkins) and Ellie Grimbridge (Stacey Nelkin) uncover this fiendish plot — but what can they do up against Cochran's humanoid assassins and a community controlled by a six o'clock curfew and an ever watchful surveillance system?

Actually, quite a lot, as it turns out. But in all honesty too much to make the finale as chillingly believable as the paranoid events leading up to it. There are just too many coincidences and contrivances for that, especially when Challiss turns into a veritable Superman! Still, I didn't mind that at all really. Yes, it is lightweight and undemanding but it is occasionally frightening and there is a fine line in parody which all goes to make *Halloween III* worthwhile. Tom Burman's special make-up effects are nice twists on old ideas — gory, but you don't feel your face is being pushed in it.

For his debut feature, Tommy Lee Wallace's direction is crsp and well-paced but his greatest talent would seem to lie in making it all look remarkably easy to achieve. The Stonehenge connection could have come from no other writer than our own celebrated Nigel Kneale. In the light of his dissatisfaction with the treatment of his original screenplay, I can only say that if he had put his name of the credits, I don't thing he would have been as embarrassed as he so short-sightedly predicted. So on the **Starburst** scale of 1-10, *Halloween III* — Audience 7■

Any film-makers listening out there? Here's a novel that's eminently cinematic: *Fevre Dream* by George RR Martin (Gollancz, £7.95). It's set on the Mississippi river in the mid-nineteenth century and is a vampire story full of colour, incident and atmosphere. *Fevre Dream* itself is a steamboat, built under the auspices of the mysterious Joshua York and captained by the bluff Abner Marsh. Marsh soon discovers that his patron, who never goes out by day and drinks an evil-tasting concoction which resembles blood, is actually a vampire. The legends have got it wrong, however, for vampires are not invisible in mirrors or threatened by garlic, silver or crucifixes. But they cannot tolerate sunlight for more than a few hours and do feed by drinking their victim's blood.

It transpires that Joshua York has discovered a means of freeing his people from their craving for blood: his special drink is an effective substitute for it and his mission is to seek out other vampires and introduce them to the drink so that they need no longer attack humans. But a group of vampires on a plantation in Louisiana are led by the infinitely sinister Damon Julian, who is not prepared to relinquish his position as bloodmaster of the group and has only contempt for ordinary humans, whom he views as cattle. The inevitable confrontation between Joshua York and Damon Julian looms as the *Fevre Dream* plies the river with Marsh in command.

What follows is an engrossing, thoroughly readable story which is rich in detail and has a vivid cast of characters. The jacket blurb compares Martin with Stephen King and Peter Straub and for once the comparison is justified: *Fevre Dream* is a fresh and intelligent reworking of a classic horror theme. Martin is, however, very much his own man and fans of Stephen King would enjoy this book and recognize the emergence of a storytelling talent in its own right. And it would make a splendid film.

Vampires are a popular theme at the moment (perhaps the recession makes writers obsessed with blood-sucking) and Suzy McKee Charnas' *The Vampire Tapestry* (Granada, £1.95) is another good book on the subject. Here the vampire is alone and living in modern-day America as an academic at a university. The novel is constructed of five linked stories which show the gradual humanization of Weyland, the vampire, as he encounters people who discover his true nature and are not totally repelled by it. Whereas *Fevre Dream* is more a study of vampires as a race with a close-knit community, this book explores the aloofness and isolation of one man who is unlike all others. I was impressed by the crispness and maturity of the writing and also by the way in which the author gradually gains the reader's sympathy for her central character even though he is a

ruthless and dispassionate man. Perhaps the most memorable and effective section is the one in which Weyland consults a psychotherapist, who soon comes to realize that his vampire-delusion is no delusion at all; another section, in which Weyland is saved by a young boy, is quite touching in its denouement. There's a lot of wisdom and warmth in this book and it deserves a wide readership.

The Golden Age of Science Fiction, edited by Kingsley Amis (Penguin, £2.95) irritated me by virtue of its highly opinionated introduction. Amis takes the view that the Golden Age spanned the period 1949-62 and that developments in the field since then have all been detrimental. It's interesting that Amis' cut-off point corresponds with a period in which he was becoming more conservative in his own work and general outlook and his arguments rest more on dogmatic assertions than reason. There might be a lot of lousy sf around these days but the last twenty years has seen the emergence of such writers as Le Guin, Disch, Priest and others who simply can't be dismissed. Having said this, I have to admit that this is a good collection of stories, containing such genuine classics as Jerome Bixby's chilling "It's A Good Life" and Kurt Vonnegut's hilarious "Harrison Bergeron". Old-time fans will be familiar with most of the stories but this is an excellent compilation for readers new to sf were it not for the introduction. The trouble is that it's likely to be read by people who will swallow Amis' generalizations and curmudgeonly pontifications on the state of the art without bothering to sample the best that modern sf has to offer.

How to describe *Zany Afternoons* by Bruce McCall? Well, I could describe the cover, which shows groups of people dining out on the wings of a 'thirties aeroplane in flight. This large format illustrated book from Picador at £4.95 which collects material first published in such magazines as *The National Lampoon*. McCall is a kind of American version of Glen Baxter in colour, with a whimsical imagination and a fondness for kitsch which leads him to perpetrate such ideas as the 1936 Cairo World's Fair, with it's molybdenum robots and its Pyramitiron, and Nazi Regalia for Gracious Living, with its baseball boots and rugby balls emblazoned with swastikas. Ever seen a Zeppelin Shoot or an Ironing Board Building? Tank Polo or Indoor Golf? An Automatic Nose-Blowing Device? They're all here in this compilation, which mixes absurdist ideas with period artwork to produce wry and witty comments on the flashier and trashier sides of popular culture■

To coincide with the Twentieth Anniversary of *Doctor Who*, *TV Zone* presents a look back at some of the newspaper coverage that the series received over the years. National Press interest usually celebrated the arrival of a new monster to terrorise the cast and most of the fascination for *Doctor Who*, according to the journalists responsible, cantered on the Doctor's biggest adversaries, the Daleks. There were exceptions however and I have attempted to include one or two of them. A majority of the articles are from the William Hartnell era at a time when popularity for the show was at a fever pitch.

One long running magazine called *Woman's Weekly* carried a short piece on Hartnell entitled "The Frail Little Gentleman is Not as Bewildered as He Seems." It included a potted filmography and made a passing reference to his home life. "*Doctor Who* lives in a charming cottage in Mayfield, Sussex and loves the country," calimed the reporter, "his feet are firmly set on this planet with hobbies like gardening, fishing, taking his Staffordshire bull terrier Stumpy for walks and browsing round antique gallaries and old furniture shops." According to the article, "William's greatest unfulfilled ambition is to play Shylock."

When the Daleks first appeared on television they took the country by storm and newspapers were quick to cash in on the story. *Daily Mail* reporter John Sandilands discussed what it must be like inside a Dalek with one of the BBC operators Peter Murphy. "It's very hot under the studio lights." said Murphy. "You can't wear more than a T-shirt and lightweight slacks. You also have to pedal the machine like a child's tricycle and work four gadgets at the same time in a tiny space. It takes a long time to master a Dalek and even then they have a tendency to skid. A move in the wrong direction could be disastrous and you have to synchronise the pre-recordad voice with the lights on the head that flash when it speaks."

Sandilands also spoke with the man behind the Dalek voices, Peter Hawkins. It was also Hawkins that had spokan for Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men, Captain Pugwash and assortad characters in The Woodentops. "I have spokan for as many as four Daleks in one scane and it's a pratty odd feeling talking to yourself in that peculiar voica." One of the main qualifications for baing a Dalek, Sandilands discovared, was that you mustn't be any taller than 5ft 6ins but, as enother operator Robert Jewell pointed out, "The prestige is tremandous. People are fascinatad when they hear you are a Dalek and certainly my two kids would be far less impressed if I'd baen playing something like *King Lear* at the Old Vic."

In the same Dalek report, Desmond Zwar told of the race to manufacture the Mini-Dalak. Although Mr Zwar was careful enough not to reveal the name of the firm about to unleash a 6in high mini-dalak costing fifteen shillings and eleven penca onto the toy market, he did hint that the company were in Swansea and that they were the original brains behind the *Yo-Yo*, a craza which swept the World in 1932.

Perhaps the most trivial of Dalak mania was Clive Hirschhorn's report on the Dalak Disc, a 7in record featuring the song 'I'm Gonna Spend My Christmas With a Dalak." composed by Johnny Worth and sung by a Newcastle group called the Go-Go's. What the customer thought of this is anybodys guess but that title must have echoed ever toy dealer's wish that Christmas as they watchad masses of Dalek merchandising filtering away across the counter to a tv crazad public. One final report that morning in the *Daily Mail* was the sad tale of the shops devoid of 5ft Daleks. At £8 each, thase replicas of the BBC spaca creatures had completely sold out. The head buyer of *Hamley's* in Regent Street told the *Mail*. "Within a day of the start of a new Dalak story in *Doctor Who* our whole stock was sold out. Some parents were buying two at a time and if I had hundreds more they would sell."

The company licensed by the BBC to manufacture the Daleks, *Scorpion and Automotives*, could not guarantee new supplias for Christmas and even resorted to sending out photogrephs of the Daleks to be used as gift vouchers because some children seemed prepared to wait until the New Year. The company's sales Director Mrs Anna Wright described how on Saturdeys thousands of children clamoured at the factory gates asking to be allowed in to play with the Daleks.

Tha *Mail* evan reported how in 1966 the BBC were planning to market the Daleks themselves. Although this idea was evantually shelvad, a spokasman for the Corporation at the time said "It is still to be decided whether they will be in the form of finishad models or maka-it-yourself kits." As if in retaliation for all this fuss over a faw animated pepperpots, actress Carole Ann Ford made the headlines whan she darad to poke her tongue out at a Dalek when the creatures put in an appearence at the *Daily Mail School-boys and Girls Exhibition* at Olympia.

John Sandilands even discussed the Dalak phanomanon in great length with series producar Varity Lambert. Miss Lambert, now the head of Film Production for Thorn EMI, mada it quite clear that she would stand up to the Daleks and hed no plans to resurrect them after the successful invasion of Earth story. How wrong she was. Tha next invasion was already underway, this time on the big scraan.

A short while later, Desmond Zwar chasad the creator of the Daleks, Terry Nation, into the seven and sixes at Studio One in Oxford Street to see how he reacted to tha first film varsion. "I found that against my will I am sort of taken over by the Daleks." said Nation. "I am known as the Dalak man." Although he denied being paid as much as £300,000 for the film rights, Zwar pointed out to him that there must be "thousands from the BBC for the Dalak stories, £50,000 from toy merchandising and the liklihood of a second film." What is particularly interesting about this article is that unlike later on, when due to a constant barrage of questions from reporters Nation had claimed he discovered the word Dalak on the spine of an encyclopedia, he tells Zwar "I took a verbal description of a Dalak – I've no idea why I thought of the name – to the BBC." More recantly, Nation has even dismissed the encyclopadia story as untrue.

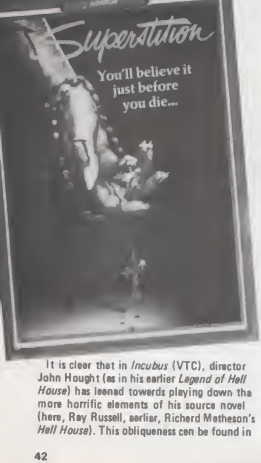
In his review of the film newspaper critic Barry Norman reflacted on the fear of the Daleks that children share up and down the country. "I know of other children who will only watch them with the sound turned off or by peering through the crack of a door from the safety of another room."

When the second film finally appaared, antitled Daleks Invasion Earth 2150 AD, film reviawer Cacil Wilson gave it a favourable coverage. 'From the moment Doctor Who (Petar Cushing) is pitchforked by a time and spaca machine into a stark future and sees their flying saucer landing in what he calls 'the vicinity of Sloane Squah,' I cannot wait for him to annihilate thesa metal monsters. Mingled with the pleasure of seeing them perish is the chilling thought that they will be back bafora long, to glida and grunt thair devilish way through another Dalak picture."

Next month *TV Zone* continues its look at *Doctor Who* through the eyas of the newspaper columnists including more Daleks and othar creatures such as Voords, Drahvins, Zarbi and K-9■

A miscellany of video offerings this month. Firstly, an interesting oddity from VTC is *Superstition* (directed by James W. Roberson). Behind up-market packaging and a totally inappropriate title, one finds a neat little occult thriller (rether Argento-like in plot if not in style).

An eighteenth century witch, Elondra Sheract, is drowned in Blackpond Leke by enraged villagers – but not before uttering dire imprecations. In the present time, the Lake (end a sinister, near-by house) are the scene of grisly deeths wrought by the ell-too-physicel presence of the witch (usuelly represented by e black-taloned hand). The murderous set-pieces, while derivetive, show some imagination (a rogue buzz-saw drilling through both victim and chair, a window that slices a luckless practical joker in twol), but, alas, very little attention has been paid to the characters – as per usual. The young Reverend (played by James Houghton) is barely one-dimensional and even seasoned professionals like Albert Salmi and Lynn Cerlin can do little with their under-written characters. If directors like Roberson can glean some devices from Hitchcock (the film's use of music is very Barnard Herrmenn-like) it seems odd thet they heven't perceived the importance of carefully structured character – we are effected by Janet Leigh's death in *Psycho* because we've been totally involved in her problems. But even if someone as gifted as John Carpanter hasn't leemed this from his idol Howard Hewks, whet hope is there for directors at the low end of the talent pole?



It is clear that in *Incubus* (VTC), director John Hought (as in his earlier *Legend of Hall House*) has leenad towards playing down the more horrific elements of his source novel (here, Ray Russell, earlier, Richerd Metheson's *Hell House*). This obliqueness can be found in all elements of the film – John Cassavetes as the doctor whose family is threetened by the melevolent entity, gives a decidedly neutral performence. But it tekes a director as subtle as Jacques Tourneur (*Night of the Demon, I Walked with a Zombie*) to meke such an approach beer fruit – and, regrettably, the results here are dispiriting. The *Incubus* itself does not live up to the lengthy preemble to its appearance.

Among the current genre releases from Video Unlimited, there is a curiosity directed by the prolific Jesus (or Jess) Franco, e film of De Sade's *Justine* – and it must be observed thet the horror elements are merginal (one cherecter is henged, various others are stabbed). Certainly the one scene most characteristic of Franco is the branding and mutilation of the unfortunate Justine by e demented noblemen.

For the rest, De Sede's catelogue of sexual torment is detailed with relish by an interesting cest; Mercedes McCembridge, Akim Temiroff and Jack Pelance (the letter way over the top as usual) but moral guardians need have no quekings of indignation – everything is curiously innocent (appropriete, perheps to de Sede's largely imaginery musings). Klaus Kinski appears as the Marquis.

Other releases from Video Unlimited include *The X From Outer Space* (Tokyo razed egein!); *The Return – a Close Encounters* hybrid with the occasionel novel idea but a too literal use of Spielbergien concepts; *Zero Population Growth* – with Oliver Reed and Geraldine Cheplin as a renegade couple in e Huxleyen future who commit the ultimete crime – procreation. As the film pointedly locates the responsibility for the world's depleted resources at the door of the religious leeders' insistence on unlimited childbirth (despite the irresponsibility of such actions) it is difficult to identify with the couple's problem. The synthetic children that couples are provided with do not significently elter this imbalence, Reed end Chaplin *still* appeer irresponsible. One also wonders how the ocean- side heven to which the couple escape et the end of the film has escaped the smoggy pollution everywhere else.

Larry Cohen's juggling with a diversity of interesting ideas in *Demon* (VTC) is a reminder thet he is one of the most consistently embitious of genre directors. Certeinly, the charge most often levelled at even such craftsmen such as John Cerpenter – thet of inedequete characterisation *never* applies to Cohen. Whet is more, the cop played in this film by Tony Lo Bienco is not just "given" cherecter traits to flesh him out – his pursuit of e sense of identity and religious commitment all dovetail into the exigencies of the plot. A series of random murders are traced by e disaffected policeman to a Messienic figure – whose face is never clearly seen – and it gradually becomes evident thet this vaguely Cherles Menson-like cherecter is the cop's doppelganger; to reveal more would be wrong. It is true thet Cohen's film (rather like Michael Reeves' *The Sorcerers*) is more intriguing on the level of ideas than in terms of concise execution; the science fiction rationele that rather startlingly eppears midway requires a certain suspension of disbelief. But the plusses are meny - the ecting is of a remarkebly high standard (egein, regrettebly, all too rare in genre films!) with top-drawer performers like Sandy Dennis end Sylvia Sydney etching tight cameos. Frenk Cordell's score may owe a lot to Jerry Goldsmith's dissonant chorel writing in *The Oman* but Goldsmith was, in turn, inspired by Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* – film making is often endless acts of homegel

Derann Video have brought out e "Double Feeture Plus" containing two feeture films in black end white and a short colour documentary. The item of interest to genre fens is John Gilling's *The Night Caller* (not to be confused with *The Night Visitor*, now deceptively aveilable on video as *The Lunatic*). Gilling's SF thriller comes across as e British *Outer Limits* episode; a peinfully economicel budget is cleverly disguised by imaginetive editing end mise-en-scene. A glowing sphere is tracked by several British Scientists (led by John Sexon as the obligetory American import of the era) and is found to be e teleportetion device belonging to en elien, specifically, the Night Visitor of the title. The plot is developed with some attempt to evoid cliche and Gilling's skill et suggesting the "otherness" of the elien is evident in the understatement of his eppearences. All of which mekes the one cetastrophic miscelculetion in the film all the more seddening: the elien is most often seen as a threatening clawed hend – but the plastic child's glove used is streight from Woolie's bergein basement and Gilling's relentless use of this wretched prop mekes one wonder why en equelly cheap but more convincing meke-up job was not devised. Still, an item of interest for the sf completist – it is e shame the supporting movies were not chosen for their sf interest; a British B-feature called *The Hi-Jackers* and a documentery of no distiction whatever.

John Brosnan

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE

I still can't understend why *Gandhi* didn't get the Oscar for Best Special Effects. What went wrong? Who slipped up? It got practicelly every other Oscer going, including Best Costume Design, so how come *E.T.* lended the effects Oscar? Did the Acedemy members confuse the two movies when voting on this category? After all, a small bald-headed, saintly being did feature in both . . .

But seriously, folks, I thought the Oscers were more fercical than usuel this year. *Gandhi's* sweep of most of the awards was ludicrous in the extreme; yet enother exemple of the emotionel hysteria thet grips the Acedemy members every so oftan (like every year). They weren't voting for e movie, they were voting for its *message* and got carried away in a rush of sentiment. Why else would they give *Gandhi* the award for Best Costume Design? The Oscar for *most* costumes in e single movie I could understend but best *design*? Good grief . . .

And of course *E.T.* didn't deserve the Visuel Effects award; that should have gone to *Blade Runner*. The only reason *E.T.* got it was beceuse the members felt they had to give Spielberg *something* seeing as they were giving Attenborough everything else. Thet's the same reason Jessica Lange received the Best Supporting Actress Oscer for her minor role in *Tootsie*; she reelly should have got the Best Actress Award for her incredible performence in *Frances* but as everyone knew Meryl Streep was a deed cert in that category for *Sophie's Choice*, Ms Lange got Best Supporting as a consolation prize even though there were more deserving cases.

The Pavlovian dog-like response to *Gandhi* by members of both the Americen end British film Academies is very depressing, especially since *Gandhi* isn't even a very good movie, nor is Attenborough a very good director. *Gandhi* is a kind of old fashioned, sub-David Leen picture (it's even structured like *Lawrence of Arabia*); well-photographed, well-acted, occasionelly impressive but basically e cinemetic dinosaur. As e potted history of Indie's struggle for independence it's feirly successful (though many people, including historians, have accused it of distorting the fects) but as a film ebout Gendhi the *man* it is fer from satisfactory.

But being a British movie — end a big, prestigious British movie et thet (e rere animal these days) — it wasn't surprising thet the members of BAFTA (British Acedemy of Film and TV Arts) should have an ettack of netional chauvinism and try end give it every eword from Best Film to Best On-Location Cetering Facilities. As a member of BAFTA I saw thet this was the way things were going to go feirly early on and when I received the final set of voting papers and sew thet Candica Bergen hed been nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her 'role' in *Gandhi*, I became certain thet sanity had flown out of BAFTA's expensive windows. I meen, *hall*, ell Ms Bergen did in *Gandhi* was smile at Ben Kingsley, take his picture and ask him some stupid questions. I would have given her the Award for Most Simpering Performance by an Actress Whose Sole Reason for Being in e Movie Was to Attract Americen Interest but thet's all.

I did my best to counteract the pro-*Gandhi* lobby in BAFTA by voting for *Blade Runner*

in every category in the preliminary nomination papers. I figured every little bit would help (I also suspect thet because it tekes so long to fill out all these papers a lot of BAFTA members don't bother unless they have e special interest; ie, they're voting for a friend's film or TV show, their own company's product, or themselves) and was gratified to see thet my favourite movie of last yeer mede it through to the finel nominetions in severel categories.

And leter I was even happier to see *Blade Runner* walk off with three BAFTA awards, including Best Visuel Effects, which is more then it got from the American Acedemy. I think it's disgraceful thet the best science fiction movie of 1982 was virtually ignored in the Oscer Awards and yes, I even think it's disgraceful that last yeer's best fentasy movie, *E.T.* was likewise treeted with something epproaching contempt by the Acedemy members.

But that's typical of them — look et whet's won Best Film in recent yeers: *Kramer vs Kramer, Ordinary People, Chariots of Fire* end now *Gandhi*. All of them ere "serious", "meaningful" end "adult" movies end ell of them ere also ponderous, self-congratulatory and tedious. The only reeson they got Oscers for Best Film is because the Acedemy members think thet such movies reflect well on their industry (and therefore on themselves) even though such movies are atypicel of the current commercial cinema.

Incidentelly, I can't help finding it ironic that everyone is going around patting themselves on the beck because a British movie, *Gandhi*, has done so well in America whan in fact the movie is violently *anti*-British. As I said in my raview of *Gandhi*, unfortunately squeezed out of the final issue of the "LL" *Cinema* magazine (LL stands for "late, lamented", of course): "The British authorities are invariebly portrayed as cynical, devious and ruthless in their dealings with their colonial subjects . . . *this* bunch of Imperial strongmen make Derth Vader's mob look like amateurs . . ."

It's as if the Americens were to make e movie glorifying Ho Chi Minh end portraying their involvement in Vietnem in the bleckest possible terms — a very unlikely event.

Finally, a letter that appeared in the London *Standard*: "Whetever heppened to the old showmenship of our cineme managers? I have not seen one manager or doormen attired in a dhoti."

As a dhoti was Gandhi's most favoured article of clothing I think thet reader mey have come up with the perfect solution for saving the British Cinema■

"They call them the haunted shores, these stretches of Devonshire, Cornwall and Ireland which rear up against the Westward ocean. Mists gather here and sea fog and eerie stories. That's not because there are more ghosts here than in other places, mind you. It's just that people who live hereabouts are *strangely* aware of them. You see, day and night, year in, year out, they listen to the pound and stir of the waves — there's life and death in that restless sound, and eternity too. If you listen to it long enough, all your senses are sharpened. You come by strange instincts; you get to recognise a peculiar cold which is the first warning — a cold which is no mere matter of degrees farenheit, but a draining of warmth from the vital centres of the living. Local people tell me they would have *felt* it, even outside that locked door. We didn't. They can't understand why we didn't know what it meant when our dog wouldn't go up those stairs. Animals *see* the blasted things, it appears! Well, my sister Pamela and I knew nothing about such matters — not *then*, we didn't. We had the disadvantage of being Londoners, just down for a fortnight's rest. That tenth day of May, 1937 was the end of our holiday . . ."

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT 2

BY PHIL EDWARDS

THE UNINV

It is with this narration, delivered in suitably sombre tones by Ray Milland, that *The Uninvited* gets underway. The 1944 Paramount production is one of the few genuinely creepy and one hundred per cent supernatural films that Hollywood has turned out, successfully in all departments — a fine and intelligent blend of mystery, romance, thrills and occasional comedy.

The Uninvited tells the story of a brother and sister (Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey) who, while holidaying away from London on the Cornish coast discover a deserted house overlooking the sea. Upon investigation they find that the house is for sale at what seems a suspiciously low price. They make the purchase from a taciturn Donald Crisp, whose lovely young grandaughter, Gail Russell, Milland immediately falls for. However, once Milland and Hussey move into Windward House they discover that it's haunted — but not just by one spook, but two. They also learn that the house holds a terrible secret which somehow involves Miss Russell.

To reveal too much more of the plot of the film is a little unfair to those who haven't seen it, for *The Uninvited* while

being a superior ghost story is also a superior and complex mystery and much of the fun of the film is trying to work out the clues which lead to the thrilling denoument.

The film was the first Hollywood work of director Lewis Allen, a film maker previously resident in England. Although Allen's light touch with the material provided by Dodie Smith and Frank Partos' screenplay would seem to indicate a promising future, nothing of Allen's later work lived up to this debut and later frightwork, 1945s *The Unseen*, while trying to repeat the success of *The Uninvited*, complete with star Gail Russell is best forgotten, despite some script input by noir master Raymond Chandler.

The Uninvited is a classically structured ghost story which, while employing all the cliches of the form – both literary and cinematic – never becomes tiresome, even on repeated viewings. Much of this durability is due to the performances of all players. Milland, until then better known for his light comedy/leading man roles is just right as the music critic who buys the house only to find he has also bought a couple of ghosts and his nervous joking when he first hears the strange sobbing which pervades the house at night strikes the tone and balance for the rest of the film. Likewise, Ruth Hussey makes a strong impression as his level-headed sister. Then-newcomer Gail Russell brought to her role a fresh-faced innocence, coupled with a genuine air of vulberability as the young girl haunted by the wraiths of Windward House.

Well-known stage actress Cornelia Otis Skinner provides the Miss Danvers look-alike with her performance as Miss Hollander, head of an insane asylum and keeper of the terrible secret of the spook infested house. Oddly enough, that same year, under the directorship of Lewis Allen, Gail Russell *portrayed* the famed Miss Skinner in the autobiographical film, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. It is Skinner's performance and character which recalls the Alfred Hitchcock classic *Rebecca* (1940), a film which *The Uninvited* has often been compared to. Even Paramount noticed the similarities to the point of mentioning them on the film poster. For in many ways, *The Uninvited*, like Rebecca, is a "woman's" picture; light romance underpinning the ghostly goings-on; the old house that hides an old secret; a room into which no one wants to go; the menacing and mysterious old friend of the previous occupant and so on.

Secondary roles are well-filled, from Donald Crisp reliably playing Donald Crisp; Moyna McGill's old family retainer and most notably, Alan Napier's friendly and authorative local doctor – the first person to take seriously the idea that Windward is actually haunted. Not only does Napier's belief give credibility to the proceedings but also a romantic interest for Ruth Hussey. In this sense, *The Uninvited* is pure formula, dictated by Milland's opening narration, through Donal Crisp's wonderfully understated, "I had some tenants five years ago who spoke of disturbances . . .", to the double whoopee ending.

Like the best of the genre, *The Uninvited* is at *its* best when merely suggesting the horrible, a point which the over-rated and non-ghostly *Poltergeist* made only too clear. Ironically, Spielberg tips his hat to the 1944 classic with a reference to the "scent of mimosa", a key element of the mystery of *The Uninvited*. It maybe going a little to far to point out the long sweeping staircase the two films have in common but, it isn't missing the point to note that the apparition of *The Uninvited* looks uncommonly like one of the many spooks of *Poltergeist*. The Raider of the Lost Arts strikes again.

Some critics of *The Uninvited* point to the overall lightness of the film, although this is an aspect of the production which I find quite entertaining and when one

sets the film within its generic context, is quite within keeping for films of this nature at the time. Perhaps one of the film's greatest assets is the crackling screenplay and one wouldn't be too far wide of the mark in attributing this paciness to producer Charles Brackett, best known for his work with maestro Billy Wilder on such films as *Five Graves to Cairo* (one of the most entertaining 'war' movies ever made), *Double Indemnity*, *The Lost Weekend* and the borderline horror film, *Sunset Boulevard*.

Another great plus to the film is Charles Lang's crisp black and white photography of Hans Dreier and Ernst Fegte's sets, in particular, the interior of Windward House. Likewise, Farciot Edouart's special effects, combining mattes and miniatures and the optical apparitions of Mary Meredith are of a particularly high standard and, thanks to Lewis Allen's basic Britishness, the Hollywood-ised small English coastal town never becomes risible. To top it all off comes Vicor Young's full blown orchestral score which successfully alternates between the gothically romantic to the romantically gothic■

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